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THE RED ARMY'S FOURTH ARM

THE Soviet Union is not to-day repeating the mistake of underestimating national feeling. At the end of the last war the Red Army, which advanced on Warsaw singing the *Internationale*, found that appeals to universal brotherhood were more than offset by the impetus they gave to outraged nationalism. Now it is Nazi Germany which has sought to uproot the idea of the nation and make the people equal, not as brothers, but as slaves. The contemporary Bolshevik accepts sovereignty and nationalism, once objects of ridicule, as part of a transitional programme. Soviet Russia is now as tender to national feeling, as she was excessively brusque towards it in the past.

The Soviet patience in dealing with Finland is in welcome contrast to the spirit in which the Soviet-Finnish war was begun in 1939. If the revised Russian terms are rejected in Helsinki it must surely be because the Finnish people are still not informed about the nature of Paasakivi's visit to Moscow, and about the disasters that have overtaken German armies on the Russian front. Although the detailed modifications that the Russians have offered in the original terms are not clear, it is understood that Stalin has made substantial changes to meet Finnish fears that the armistice might only be a prelude to harsh peace terms, and the Helsinki Government can hardly expect any further concessions. It will be committing a terrible crime against the Finnish people if it again refuses the peace that Russia offers.

Molotov's declaration to Rumania coincides with the Red Army's successful crossing of the Pruth. M. Molotov assures Rumania that the entry of Russian troops "is in no way aimed at the integrity of Rumanian territory or the existing social order." On a long view the ruling classes of Rumania may not be wholly reassured, since the arrival of the Red Army is surely likely to bring about a revolutionary feeling, whether it is actively sponsored by the Soviet Government or not. The Russian move, however, may have immediate effects among Rumanian officers as well as among peasants. Nor will Rumania be the only country affected. The extent of unrest in Bulgaria is still in doubt, while the Germans, by Gestapo penetration, have tried to forestall the appearance of a genuine opposition to Horthy. What we foresee, with some confidence, is the rise throughout the whole of Central and South-Eastern Europe of a peasant movement, not Communist but pro-Soviet. Such a movement will have strong nationalist proclivities, but is likely to spread across national boundaries, and, like Tito's army, which is its prototype, to be in effect a federation of a variety of national armies.

Red Army in Rumania

A fortnight ago when the Russians, having forced passages across the upper and middle Dniester, were sweeping forwards to Czernowitz and Jassy, it looked as though the entire German Southern Army Group was threatened with complete destruction in detail. The 4th Panzer Army was being pressed back westwards towards Lemberg on a line running from Kowel to the Galician oilfields round Stanislau. On its right the 1st Panzer Army appeared to be almost encircled in a narrow pocket stretching from the Pruth northwards across the Dniester. Still farther east, the battered German 8th and 6th Armies were in an unenviable position: the whole of their rearward communications with Rumania were exposed to the threat of Russian advances southwards, either between the Dniester and the Pruth through Kishinev or, west of the Pruth, through Jassy in the direction of Galatz.

The latest news suggests that the Germans, with remarkable resilience, are managing to fend off the worst of these threats. The ring round the 1st Panzer Army was for long not closed, and elements of the encircled divisions have probably managed to escape across the Dniester and the Pruth, though with heavy loss in equipment. In Bessarabia, between the Pruth and the Dniester, the Russian advance has been slowed up sufficiently to give the 6th Army, east of the Dniester, time to fall back on Odessa and the Dniester bridge at Tiraspol. Finally, though the Russians have now forced crossings of the Pruth north of Jassy, an enveloping movement directed on Galatz between the Pruth and the Carpathians seems unlikely to develop in time to cut off the Germans round Odessa, unless, once more, they make the mistake of "hanging on too long."

If the Rumanians, who are believed to be holding large stretches of the Pruth, fight on, the enemy has still got a chance of being able to consolidate a line covering Ploesti and Bucharest—with a garrison possibly left in Odessa to deny that port to the Russians as long as possible. But whether further Russian progress be slow or rapid, it is clear that the Red Army's achievements have already thrown completely out of gear the Germans' defensive time-table. The plan of the German High Command was certainly based on the hope that by maintaining large forces in the West and Italy, and by pursuing "elastic tactics" in the East, they could defeat the Allies in the West before the Russians reached in the East positions from which they could immediately threaten any vital part of the greater German Reich. This they have failed to do. By launching their Spring offensive months earlier than appeared to be climatically possible, the Russians should by next month be in a position to begin simultaneous operations against Bucharest through the Galatz Gap, against Hungary across the Carpathians, and against Silesia across the plain of Southern Poland. The threat to Germany from the East is already coming much too close for German hopes of a compromise peace begotten of stalemate and inter-Allied disappointments to materialise.

Soviet Policy in Italy

In the case of Finland and Rumania, we are told that there has been full inter-Allied exchange of information and agreement on policy. This happy state of affairs may have been partly the result of lessons learnt by all the Allies in Italy. Not for the first time the Soviet Government has used its own or the foreign press as a mouthpiece for important statements of policy. The British and Americans find this an embarrassing kind of diplomacy, but it must be admitted that if collaboration on another line has failed, a press explanation is better than none. In the

latest case, *Izvestia* has published a justification of the Soviet recognition of Badoglio which makes some very sharp references to the way in which the Soviet Government had been left out of discussions about Allied policy in Italy. "The Soviet Union," it said, "had an unequal status compared with Britain and America." Mr. Eden, moreover, had, in their view, deliberately evaded the question and sought to shift the responsibility for lack of co-operation on to the Soviet Union. Therefore the recognition of Badoglio was necessary to rectify this anomalous position and to ensure that the direction of Allied policy in Italy should no longer remain the preserve of Whitehall and the State Department. Good back-chat, but not good inter-Allied staff work. Undoubtedly the Soviet action has entirely transformed the internal situation in Italy. With the return of the shrewd and able leader of the Italian Communists, Palmiro Togliatti, the Communists now have become the most important if not the most influential of the opposition parties. Togliatti—who under the pseudonym of Ercoli was one of the most prominent leaders of the Comintern—made a well-timed arrival from Moscow. He will no doubt persuade his own party to co-operate with the Badoglio administration, and to shelve the constitutional issues for the time being.

Mr. Roosevelt and the French

The French in Algiers are evidently still disturbed by President Roosevelt's instructions to General Eisenhower, which place on him the onus of deciding with what French local authorities, other than Vichy itself, he will deal as the future invasion proceeds. Their answer is a very proper and positive one: they have drawn up their own plan, which is in brief that the liberated territory will be divided into rear zones and forward zones. In the former a delegate named by the Committee of National Liberation will exercise civil authority and deal with the American army; in the latter a general officer as military delegate will represent the French Commander-in-Chief and make the *liaison* with the active army of the Allies. On this negotiations with the Americans are said to be proceeding. It is intelligible that the initiative should lie with Mr. Roosevelt. But the British and the Russians have a right to a voice in the matter. We hope we may assume that neither our Government nor theirs would assent to the policy of the White House, which is still, apparently, bent on dealing, if it can, with any local Darlans or Peyroutons it can discover, rather than with the national movement of resistance, solidly organised behind De Gaulle. In that connection it is good news that the Communists have now, after long delays, permitted two of their members, Greuier and Billoux, to join the Committee, which is in effect a Cabinet in which de Gaulle now holds the great powers of Minister of Defence as well as President.

Chinese Mysteries

No light has yet been shed from any quarter on the Soviet allegation that the territory of Outer Mongolia (which is under the protection of the U.S.S.R.) has been violated from Sinkiang (which is part of China). It would not be surprising if some "incident" had occurred when a few months ago the Russians pleased the Chinese by evacuating their troops from Sinkiang. The mystery is why the U.S.S.R., which alleges that this incident took place before the end of last year, should raise the subject now, three months later. The Chungking government has as yet issued no official statement, though a denial has come from Chungking. The Chinese authorities, who stand so much in need of the good will of the Western Powers, habitually fail to make their case to the foreign press.

Chinese press officials have not yet grown accustomed to the idea that foreign correspondents in Chungking have an interested public at home which expects to hear straight honest news from the China front. This means that censorship must be limited to questions of security, and journalists must be allowed to report political, financial and social problems. The Chinese Government has everything to gain by frank and friendly discussion on such controversial issues as the medical blockade of the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia Border area. How much better, for instance, it would have been if Chungking had released the story of the full-dress debate on the subject in the Peoples' Political Council last September. The P.P.C. is gradually developing into a kind of Parliament, and a critical session would have reflected its strength, not its weakness. After the Council had heard the report of the Minister of War, General Ho Ying-chin, the Chungking representative of the Eighth Route Army charged the Minister with suppressing the facts of the situation in North China. For four years, he said, the troops in the rear of the enemy had not received one medical tablet from free China. When General Lin Pao of the Eighth Route Army was preparing to return to Yenan in the spring and summer of 1943, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and General Chang Chih-chung, head of the Political Department of the Chinese army, told him that they had repeatedly asked General Ho to order the release of medicines to the Eighth Route Army. But nothing happened. In face of a large audience of the Peoples' Political Council, General Ho was asked point blank by General Tung why he had not given the Eighth Route Army medicines when ordered to do so by the Government, and how it came about that the gifts of foreign friends were confiscated before they got to the people for whom they had been specifically earmarked. There was no reply to these questions. The Chinese is not the only war minister who avoids difficult issues.

Equal Pay in Industry

The case for "equal pay" is unanswerable; but with "for equal work" attached to it it means much less for the main body of working women than it does in the professions. Even when men and women work side by side on the same tasks, there are often large differences. For example, in the cotton industry women have long had "equal pay" in the sense of receiving the same piece rates as the men; but the men earn on the average much more because they work more machines or are employed on special "fancy" weaving. There is not a great deal of difference in relative earnings of men and women between the cotton industry and some industries in which nominally different rates are paid. In most industries, under normal conditions, men and women work not on the same but on different processes, though it is quite common to find that what is a woman's trade in one area is a man's trade in another. In practice, when substitution takes place under war conditions, the women seldom, except in transport, get the same earnings as the men they replace. There is so often some rearrangement—for instance, many women work under male supervisors and do not, like the men, set up their own machines. The women's advocates say this need not and should not be the case; but the fact remains that few women learn a skilled trade by apprenticeship, formal or informal, in the same way as men, and that the likelihood of retirement on marriage makes most of them unwilling to accept the long probation and low earnings which apprenticeship involves. "Equal pay for equal work" would not make a vast difference to costs in most industries, if it were interpreted as it usually has been in the past.

Equality in the Professions

"Equal pay" would, on the other hand, make a vast difference in the professions, including teaching and the civil and local government services. In teaching, it would not really equalise conditions, unless local authorities took to appointing many more headmistresses, instead of nearly all headmasters, in elementary schools. But it would make this further reform much more likely. In the Civil Service, "equal pay" would presumably cost a good deal, especially if it involved payment of family allowances, which is the obvious way of making it work out fairly. How it affected the lower Civil Service grades would be largely a matter of classification; and there would be sharp disputes on this point if the principle were accepted. In the local government as well as in the Civil Service the question of promotions would obviously be of the first importance, and is, of course, tied up with that of enforced resignation on marriage, which ought obviously to be everywhere given up. In the higher posts in industry, it is not easy to see how the principle would be applied; for there are in most cases no standard rates, but simply a practice of paying a woman much less than would in fact be paid to a man for doing the same job. One of the most difficult problems would be that of the host of social service professions and voluntary societies of all sorts, which live largely on badly paid women's labour. They would have to adapt themselves to a change in the practice of the major professions—but all this is perhaps of the order of counting chickens where Mr. Churchill has already addled the eggs.

The Future of Electricity Supply

There was a good deal of surprise when, last year, the various bodies connected with electricity supply issued a joint memorandum which appeared to contemplate the continuance of the service after the war on the existing basis of divided ownership between the power companies, the private electricity supply companies, and the municipal undertakings. The surprising thing was that this memorandum was signed by representatives of the municipal undertakings. Apparently, the municipal representatives who agreed to the joint report did not really represent their constituents; for the Municipal Electrical Association has now come out with a memorandum advocating public ownership of the industry with retention of municipal control over distribution. The battle is therefore now fairly joined. It will be remembered that, when the McGowan Report was issued, a deadlock was reached because the proposed grouping would have handed over many municipal companies to private companies which supplied current at much higher prices in adjacent areas. Clearly, if there is to be regional unification, public ownership is the only possible basis for it. The commonsense policy is to unify the control of generation and main-line transmission in the hands of the C.E.R., with power to retain existing efficient publicly owned stations in municipal hands, and at the same time to unify distribution under regional public corporations.

PARLIAMENT: Old Kaspar's work . . .

Tuesday, noon.

THE House, a soundly-thrashed cur, still emits occasional yelps or whines. Last Thursday's famous victory crops up in all sorts of unexpected contexts. George Strauss received one of the usual stalling answers about Spanish and Portuguese exports of wolfram to Germany; so Shinwell upped and asked why the Government could not treat these neutrals as the Prime Minister treated the House. Neatest of such comments was perhaps Cunningham-Reid's, on Friday. Grigg, flying a bit high for him, said: "I would have thought that the finality of the decision of the House of Commons was one of the fundamental rights of man in this country." Captain Cunningham-Reid: "Except the day before yesterday."

Grigg had, as a matter of fact, a strong case at this moment. Hugh Lawson (Common Wealth), seconding a new clause to the Army and Air Force (Annual) Bill which would have allowed soldiers off duty to "take part in political controversy," had ventured to repeat his boast that he had consistently, when in the Army, broken a King's Regulation because he did not believe it to have "any real validity at all on the basis

of the fundamental rights of mankind." This argument disquieted Members on both sides of the House — including Socialists like John Dugdale, who want to allow the troops more political freedom—and Grigg had little difficulty in puncturing it. Lt.-Col. Lancaster pointed out, with suave irony, how pernicious it would have been if he himself, a Tory, had tried to influence politically the men under his command. Petherick described Common Wealth as "Communism in a bowler hat, a surplice, phylacteries, and peroxide hair." Dugdale asked what a soldier *was* to do in his leisure hours if not indulge in politics, and suggested (in a somewhat involved flight of dialectic) that Miss Dorothy Lamour should "come along and instruct the Army on the best methods of warfare." Mr. Bartle Bull: "Talking is not her strong point."

This was one of the Member for Enfield's happier interjections; the staider Tories could do with a little artificial insemination from this Bull. In last week's more serious debates, however, he was savagely handled by that dauntless *torero* Aneurin Bevan (who also coined an agreeable word when he told him to stop "bartling"):—

Mr. Bevan: . . . We might as well abandon all Committee stages and all Bills from now on.

Mr. Bartle Bull: We might as well not have any Government.

Mr. Bevan: We might as well have no House of Commons.

Mr. Bull: And have something like a French Chamber of Deputies instead.

Mr. Bevan: The hon. Gentleman's intervention has not its usual pertinence. He is one of those irresponsible people who know that they will never be elected to the House again, and does not care what he says.

Another Tory wit, Sir Herbert Williams, was teased by Grigg at question time. When he pressed a rather trivial question about a particular waste of paper, Grigg said that he had already had one adequate answer; however, since he wanted another, it was that "Homer, unlike the hon. Member for South Croydon, sometimes nods."

Old Mr. Thorne pegs away with questions based, apparently, on newspaper reports of every police raid on any club anywhere. He asked the Home Office what action it intended taking about the raid on the Maison des Hommes Club, Upper Islington, N. The Home Office replied that the "position" was "somewhat technical"; but made it clear that the alleged offences were to do with gambling.

PONTIFEX MINOR

THE FAMINE IN BENGAL

MR. CASEY, in his first broadcast as Governor of Bengal, has just argued that famine cannot scourge his province for a second year. In some respects we believe that the outlook has changed for the better. India has in Lord Wavell a viceroy who acts boldly, smashes precedents and obeys his instincts of humanity. Belated supplies of grain continue to arrive from the Dominions. On the spot the Army has flung itself into the work of rescue and relief with zeal and warm feeling. It is penetrating into the remoter villages, lending its lorries to carry grain, transporting the sick to hospital, opening kitchens for the destitute and fighting the epidemics by inoculation on a great scale. Troops, fresh from England, have felt horror and shame at their first contact with Indian poverty; for famine is only an aggravation of the habitual under-nourishment of its masses. This new relationship of Army to people is one of the most salutary things that have ever come about in the history of our dealings with India. So far, then, we are glad to believe that what happened last year cannot happen again.

Mr. Casey's official optimism is, however, alarming. Authority, in India as in Whitehall, was as complacent throughout this calamity as it was inert. It foresaw nothing: then it minimised and denied, and when at last it admitted something of the truth, it consoled us with its estimate that "only" a million had died. Even if it is true, as we hope, that the worst is over, the abnormal mortality caused by the diseases that follow in famine's wake—cholera, malaria and small-pox—will go on swelling a total that may already be nearer to three than one million. The staple diet of Bengal is rice, a poor food even when it is plentiful. It sold at the end of the last war at Rs.4 per maund (82 lb.) and at Rs. 6 on the eve of the famine. The Government is still struggling to hold its average price at Rs. 20. So long as inflation rages at this height, it is obvious that hunger, if not famine, still threatens this land.

There has now reached us a belated copy of a supplement published by the *Statesman* of Calcutta, in which the famine is described. It is, we may remind our readers, a daily newspaper with a long and honourable tradition, owned and edited by Englishmen. Photographs tell their ghastly story with a power that words never possess, even when a master uses them. Here, if you can bear to look at them, are the victims of the famine. The fragile children are so nearly skeletons that one marvels that they can still squat or stand. Here is a mother so emaciated that she cannot have long to live; but she still clasps her babies to her bosom. Here again is a mother whose relics of children, two of them, lie stiff and extended on the pavement: she touches one of them to learn whether it is yet cold. In two of the pictures the dead, the dying and the living lie together on the pavement. The dead are the enviable members of these groups.

The terror that masters some of these faces will turn the victims mad, unless help comes soon. Some happier photographs follow, which show us British troops feeding the famine-stricken from their rations or mustering a food convoy. The last of the series shows us the huts and palm-trees of a deserted village. In the foreground, desolate among the luxuriant flowers of this bountiful climate, sits "a sick and starving widow of eighteen years, who has lost her parents and child, the solitary survivor in a village ravaged by famine and disease."

A collection of letters reprinted from the *Statesman*, some from English and some from Indian pens, fill in some of the details. One of them, from a member of the Friends' Ambulance Unit, describes a journey into the country. In some of the villages the survivors are, he writes, too weak to burn the dead. "A fight between vultures and dogs over a corpse is no rare sight." On the canals drift the bloated bodies of the dead. This letter, from a responsible relief-worker, ends with the statement that malaria and starvation threaten Contai (a big and once populous district) with "virtual depopulation." Other writers describe scenes in Calcutta and convey collectively a disturbing impression of callousness and inefficiency. One of them saw a corpse left to rot for several days on the platform of a railway station. Another found a boy lying unconscious and dying on the pavement outside a police station. Two hospitals had refused to admit him on the ground that they were full. The police left him to die where he lay. A photograph shows women lying asleep, tightly packed against each other on the pavement, because they must take their place overnight in the queues that wait to buy rice. A letter describes the experiences of a Bengali worker, a man. He joined the rice queue at 2 a.m., stood in the rain through the night and in the end got no rice. He then stood (for a third day, after two failures) in a queue for sugar and thereafter in one for kerosene. He got a very little of both and trudged home at 3 p.m. He mentioned, laconically, as others do, that "bribes are taken." It would be possible from these letters to build up a detailed picture of life in Calcutta, so sombre and so unrelievedly sordid that the reader would ask at the end, what is it that gives these wretches the will to survive? There is rarely a mention of any unofficial effort to help, save for the work of the Friends. Amid the desolation horse-racing went on as usual.

Against this background of visible fact the comments of the *Statesman* in its leading articles, blunt and outspoken though they are, seem hardly controversial. From first to last it lashes the incompetence of all the authorities concerned, British and Indian, with perfect impartiality. It divides the responsibility for this terrible calamity, as we did, between the Centre and the two Governments that held office in Bengal. It contrasts, as we did at the time, the efficiency of the administrative machine in coping with political disorder, with its incompetence in dealing with an economic problem. It convicts "the Centre"—meaning, in plain English, the Viceroy and his Council—of an inexcusable lack of foresight, since they allowed a whole year to elapse, after Japan had brought the war to the frontiers of India, before they set up any department authorised to concern itself with food. When it was set up what it chiefly did was to preach complacency, *laissez faire* and the merits of free trade in grain. The *Statesman* writes with impatience and contempt about Bengali politicians in general: it dwells on the violence of party spirit and the intemperance of personal rivalries in this province. It is specially severe on the Ministry over which Fazul Huq presided, and regards the present coalition which the Muslim League got together as an improvement on its predecessor—which is not saying much. At the height of the crisis in September half of its entire administrative personnel took a fortnight's holiday on the pretext of religion. On the municipality of Calcutta the *Statesman* pours out its measureless condemnation and backs its charges of laziness and incompetence with an impressive amount of detail. It carried out with gross negligence even the most elementary services, such as the collection of garbage, and its water supply also was doubtful. When it had to face the really difficult problem caused by the influx of starving villagers into Calcutta, it could not rise to the occasion. Its worst offence was that it delayed for a whole year the introduction of an adequate rationing scheme. Bombay was by contrast prompt and efficient.

There is little in this record to flatter our racial pride. The Civil Servants were as much to blame as the Ministers, and perhaps more so, for the neglect and inefficiency of the Provincial Administration, and they, in the senior ranks, are still largely British. The police in Calcutta were mainly responsible for the failure to deal in a humane and efficient way with the refugees who camped in the streets; they are Indians under British officers. At "the Centre" the responsibility fell on Lord Linlithgow and the British officials round him. They were very slow to apply to India the lessons learned during two wars in our own country and elsewhere. They allowed the inflation to get out of control before they thought of any steps to cope with it. They were, for example, several years too late in imposing a measure of rent restriction in Calcutta; even then it was done in a half-hearted and ineffective way.

What has to be said about the conduct of Indians during this crisis is not more pleasant. Some men of business and merchants gave way to a greed which the *Statesman* denounces hotly. It also notes that little was done by the voluntary effort of Indians to combat the famine. That was, however, largely a consequence of our relations with Indian public opinion, and more especially with Congress. It is usually prodigal in organising voluntary service in times of emergency due to floods or earthquakes. It can also, when it pleases, mobilise public feeling and even the irresistible pressure of the more powerful castes to deal with the anti-social selfishness of individual Indians. But it is to-day (however one may distribute the blame) a prohibited organisation, whose leaders are all in prison.

It is impossible to read this story as the *States-*

man tells it—or, indeed, as a correspondent told it in our own issue of January 1st—without a sense that this tragedy passes judgment on our rule in India. An empire which cannot cite the consent of the governed as its title to rule has only one possible justification in the eyes of history; it must be able to show a convincing record of good government. This in the old days we might do, so long as men were content with a negative conception of government: we kept the peace, maintained internal order and administered clean and impartial justice. Even this was to claim too much, for our police in the lower ranks were rough and not too honest. But it was only very gradually and very partially that the British Raj ever conceived that it was responsible for the welfare, mental and physical, of the vast numbers it governed. They remained, therefore, in the mass illiterate, backward and a prey to superstition. They are so impoverished that a rise in food prices can plunge them into such a ghastly famine as this which has scourged Bengal. The bureaucracy does efficiently what it really believes in doing: it can maintain law and order. In the more positive and creative arts of government it has never as a whole effectively believed, in spite of some distinguished achievements in engineering. It has done a poor job in paving the way for its successor, yet nothing remains for it to do save to smooth the path towards self-government.

RUMANIA'S CRISIS

[By a Correspondent]

For Rumania the course of the war has reached full circle. Four years ago, when the Rumanian Government decided to stake everything on Axis victory, the Ploesti oilfields were to supply the needs of Panzer divisions rolling forward towards the Volga. To-day, with the defeated German armies falling back on the Carpathians and the Pruth, an imminent Russian advance on Ploesti and Bucharest will be a stage in the final march of the Red Armies on Berlin. It is to a Rumania facing the grim prospect of being overwhelmed in Germany's catastrophe that Mr. Molotov has addressed what is virtually an invitation to sue for terms. What is the Rumanian reaction likely to be?

In 1939, Rumania was allied to Poland and guaranteed by France and Great Britain. In 1940 she played the role of jumping board to the German forces descending on Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia. Why? The answer is not difficult to find. It was because her Royal Court and her ruling caste of politicians followed a policy of opportunism and cynical selfishness, devoid of any moral principles. Rumania's hour of trial brought confirmation of the often-noticed fact that her political system was in complete decay, rotted by intrigue and corruption. In a country where the vast majority of the people are illiterate peasants, with no political convictions, such a state of affairs cannot but result in disaster, and it will take Rumania a long time to recuperate from the disaster which now threatens her.

After the defeat of France, Rumania, for whom France had represented the core of the Allied strength, remained stunned. Instead of making a gallant stand against Germany's demands, King Carol and his comically uniformed Ministers threw themselves into Hitler's arms. In less than two months Rumania lost Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, Southern Dobrudja and two-thirds of Transylvania. At that crucial moment in her history not a single politician of any standing could be found ready to fight for freedom and justice. While many Rumanians reviled the "plutocratic domination" of Western democracy, the more far-sighted knew that Germany, in her Nazi form, stood for oppression and darkness. Yet not only the out-and-out "quislings," but the great majority of the other politicians, decided that it was better for the country to live in servitude than for them to risk German gaols.

Since Rumania became Germany's active partner in aggression, she has passed through three distinct phases. First, there was the period of economic and political co-operation, which lasted until June, 1941. Germany's attack on Russia started for Rumania the much more painful and costly period of contribution in blood as well as in materials. The third period began with the German defeat at Stalingrad, and is nearing its close. It is different from the second in so far as the country's contribution is made in the face of the outspoken opposition of the Rumanian people as a whole.

At the beginning, Rumania's economic and political collaboration with the Axis did not work badly for either partner. Being a rich country and having lost many of her export markets owing to the war, Rumania could satisfy Germany's needs without undergoing any hardships. Germany obtained oil, ores, timber and foodstuffs, and in exchange Rumania was allowed to congratulate herself on having escaped the devastation of war. She watched Greece and Yugoslavia being bombed and terrorised, and her politicians sneered at Metaxas and General Simovic. It was a period during which the Rumanian rulers were proud of themselves, while the people were still endeavouring to understand the re-orientations of policy which had taken place in such rapid succession. It was the time when the Iron Guards, tolerated by the Government of Marshal Antonescu and backed by many army officers, were trying to endear themselves to the Germans by indulging in pogroms throughout the country, and violently insulting "British Plutocracy and Jewry."

The second phase started with great hopes for the rulers of the country. The Rumanian people as a whole had no grievances against Russia. Antonescu and his henchmen tried to stir them with the promise of the reconquest of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, but relied primarily on the promise that if they pleased Hitler he would restore Transylvania. As a German victory looked likely, they agreed to march against Russia—without enthusiasm, but with the resolve to make the best of an inglorious job. Together with the then "invincible" German Army they hoped to be victorious at very little cost and in a very short time. But their rulers had even bigger plans. They wanted to govern the people of Transdniestria as well. Not even they believed the laboriously produced "evidence" that Transdniestria was in fact Rumanian territory. Their reason for wanting it was exactly the same as that which prompted Mussolini to attack Greece and France. Their thirst for power had no limits. Did they not dream of making Bucharest the main capital of Europe East of Berlin?

The German defeat at Stalingrad shook Rumania maybe more than it shook Germany. The country realised that its army, of which it was so proud, was going to its doom in the Russian campaign. A deep anxiety took hold of the people. The relatives of soldiers became restless. Even some generals resigned rather than continue the campaign. To the Government in Bucharest, however, the picture appeared in a different light. They had to choose between the country's interest and their own, between calling the army back or fighting Hitler's battles East of Rostov. There was no hesitation. They chose the second alternative. Ever since they have been fighting not only against Russia but against their own people as well. As a consequence of their decision a paradoxical situation arose in the country. While the people were being looted and bled white, Bucharest was thriving. While the peasants were either sent to the front or robbed of the produce of their labours, the oligarchy in the capital was leading a life of luxury. The people daily became more gloomy and despondent and the rulers daily more servile to the Germans.

This third phase is now quickly approaching its end. The animosity between the people and their rulers is reaching a new peak of intensity. In rural districts the peasants, instead of sending their produce to the towns where it is requisitioned by the Germans, hide it or waste it on their cattle. A system of barter has been developed which prevents any goods reaching the market in quantities comparable to a year or so ago. Owing to lack of organisation there is very little, if any, sabotage, and no guerilla actions to speak of. For this there would be a need of an executive body led by some well-known figure. Such a leader has still to appear. In towns, the people's opposition to the Government is shown by their failure to comply with most of the Government's wartime regulations. Thus, the anti-semitic rag *Porunca Vremii* complained the other day that the waiting rooms of Jewish lawyers and doctors were full of Aryans trying to "insure" themselves for after the war! The writer of the article also complained that the paper's circulation is decreasing alarmingly. This discontent of the people with its Government and Royal Court is gradually spreading towards the higher strata of society, and with every fresh advance of the Red Armies towards the heart of Rumania the number of Government supporters dwindles.

At present the Royal Court and the Government are still holding the country down. It is a sad and painful fact that in this task it still has the support of most well-known Rumanian politicians. Apart from a few former Ministers who were assassinated by the Iron Guards in December, 1940, Rumania's leading political figures have not distinguished themselves by any but verbal opposition to the war. This applies to the leader of the National Peasant Party, Juliu Maniu, as well as to the leader of the Liberal Party, Dino Bratiano. Maniu's attitude has been distressingly parochial; he has concerned himself far too exclusively with the issue of Transylvania, which in fact has loomed far more largely than any other in the minds of Rumanians during the war. For that reason the declaration by Dr. Benes that the Russians recognised the Rumanian character of Transylvania is likely to have had a profound effect. Disillusion must now be complete. When the German seizure of Hungary did not involve the disappearance of Horthy, it must have been clear to all Rumanians that Transylvania would never be restored to them by German help. The discovery of this final deception must have been peculiarly bitter, because in the effort to outbid Hungary with Hitler the Rumanians had made far greater sacrifices on the Russian front than the Magyars. The shattering of this illusion snaps the main spring of Rumania's war effort.

Various names have been mentioned in connection with a possible Rumanian "peace" government. George Tatarescu, former Premier under King Carol, and Grigore Gafencu, former Foreign Minister, have been among the latest "tips." Tatarescu was the Daladier of Rumania. Could Daladier have any future in France? Gafencu has been invited to come to London. He refused to come when he was Ambassador in Moscow, two years ago, and is said to have again declined an invitation a few months ago. He prefers to reside in Switzerland and watch developments from neutral territory.

It may be that the Russians, with their assurances that Rumania's territorial integrity and social structure will be respected by them, will find a Badoglio among the Rumanian generals. If not, and Rumania becomes a battlefield, we may expect the emergence of leaders ready to guide their unhappy compatriots with the advice and help of the Russians. But before this takes place the Germans will, if they can, make use of the Iron Guard as their last chance of keeping Rumania in the war by terror. They may even install the fanatic Horia Sima in power. It is only when the Germans are cleared from Rumania that it will be possible to assess the country's eventual political development.

A LONDON DIARY

THE formation of a political committee inside Greece, led by Colonel Bakirdjis, has now been officially announced. A friend who knows Bakirdjis gives me some interesting details about his career. He is by no means one of those military adventurers who infested Greek politics between the wars. He joined the Venizelos forces at Salonika in 1916 and the British awarded him the D.S.O. for gallantry. As Chief of Staff to General Plastiras in 1922, he helped overthrow the pro-German Government of King Constantine, the father of the present King. Then, under the Metaxas dictatorship, he was exiled for republican activity. Escaping from a small Aegean island he devoted himself to working abroad against King George and Metaxas. Politically, he is said to be about as far to the Left as Lloyd George in his Limehouse days, for which the Greek ruling class dubbed him the "Red Colonel." When the Italians attacked Greece in 1940 he returned home but he was not allowed to fight. When the Germans came he went into hiding. In the autumn of 1942, he managed to escape to the Middle East. Far from being allowed to join the Greek Army there, it seems that he only avoided imprisonment because he held a British decoration. When the guerrilla delegation went back to Greece after their fruitless negotiations with the Tsouderos Government in Cairo, he accompanied them. The committee appears to be following a different course to Marshal Tito. For the moment they are trying to avoid a direct clash with the emigré government and actually called on Mr. Tsouderos to form a broader administration which would include the guerilla forces. Mr. Tsouderos having refused and resigned, will Mr. Venizelos, his successor, profit by the Yugoslav example? If not, I don't expect the new political committee to waste much time with him or his reactionary colleagues.

* * *

I have had the rare chance to read over a photographic copy, smuggled from Norway, of a curious German military document. It is in effect speaker's notes for "pep talks," which regimental officers are expected to give to their men ("Mitteilungen für die Truppe") and is dated February 1944. It is written in a breezy popular style. Nazism, it says, is the form and expression of the German way of life and in no sense an article of export. Bolshevism, on the other hand, began as a way of salvation for all the nations, but has now been transformed into Soviet Imperialism. It then goes on to attack the grumblers and "sea-lawyers," who are to be found in every group of men and even in every company of the army. Do not argue with them: shut them up at once. The most interesting statement comes at the end. It seems that the Russians have been scattering from the air big bundles of a leaflet dealing with the soldier's oath of obedience (*Fahneneid*). In this the statement was made that Hitler had drawn down on Germany the hostility of the whole world. To this the answer is that the old Empire had to endure this same enmity thirty years ago: but it was at its worst against "the democratic and pacifist" regime of Weimar. The new fact under Hitler is that the German people are awake and resist. "But to argue about the oath is a thing no respectable Nazi will do: the enemy cannot understand the ties of loyalty that bind us German men to the Führer." All of which is interesting for it evidently betrays some anxiety in the mind of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, lest this attempt to sap the German soldier's allegiance may, after all, have some effect.

* * *

A few of the facts about the behaviour of some Polish officers towards minorities in the ranks of the Polish army in this country are now leaking out. That Ukrainians should wish to join the British army is significant enough; far more important is the very large number of Polish Jews who have carried their protest to the length of coming to London and petitioning to be allowed to join the British Army instead of remaining in an army where they are treated very much as if they were in Germany. The facts about the treatment of Jews and Ukrainians in the Polish army are now likely to come out. I hear that Mr. Driberg is raising the matter in the House of Commons.

* * *

Two angry Poles have written, challenging my statement about the number of Polish military attachés. I've now checked the figure. My original statement was correct. The budget of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives the number of military attachés for 1938–9 as 21, for 1943 as 39, and for 1944 as 53.

I am authoritatively told that *not one* of the present 53 military attachés has taken part in any campaign during the war—not in Poland, not in France, not in Norway and not in Tobruk.

If the Polish Government still has an unemployed military attaché, why not send a military mission to Tito who hasn't any Polish military attaché at present?

* * *

I knew Wingate enough to find some of the official eulogies rather nauseating. For on the occasion when I had a long talk with him it was mainly about the way in which the War Office refused to believe that guerilla warfare was worth anything. He had offered other proof to the contrary in Palestine and Abyssinia; he had other plans and was angry that night because his special experience seemed to him likely to be deliberately wasted. Later I heard in some detail about his part at the Quebec conversations. He always had brilliant ideas. The orthodox staff officers were always horrified or incredulous. Mr. Churchill listened with interest and excitement. He, too, is a man of imagination. But then came the difficulty. There seemed no one capable of carrying out Wingate's plans except Wingate himself. But I think some people have learnt from him since the days of Quebec.

* * *

There are times when most of us feel much sympathy with the American soldier who asked why some guy did not "cut the strings on those damned balloons, and let the British island sink." And then someone takes a line that shows that the things that have made us all, at some time or other, glad we are British are still very much alive. At the end of the last war when the *Daily Mail* was asking why we should feed Hun babies and why we should worry about the Continent and all that, British soldiers began to share their rations with German children, and the Generals told the Government they could not guarantee discipline if the blockade went on. To-day some papers are beginning the same talk, and a few of us who have tried to get people to notice that after this war everyone in Europe will be more or less starving, suddenly get a helping hand from Allan Moorhead, the best of war correspondents in this war. He is actually allowed to give a postscript telling people they are concerned with Europe's starvation and describing the conditions of liberated Italy—which may be the condition of liberated France and conquered Germany. If there are enough Moorheads we may again escape the final disgrace that belongs to those with no imagination.

* * *

To do them justice the Communists are well aware that a Unity Conference called by the *Daily Worker* cannot lead to unity or even set up machinery for producing it. That can only happen when the move comes from within the Labour Party. I see that the A.E.U., which is one of the key unions, is officially requesting the Labour Party to take such an initiative. This is a beginning. In the meantime, all that Communists can now attempt is to build up favourable opinion within trade unions and other bodies which send delegates, and discuss the problem with organisations not affected by the Labour Party ban. According to a friend who was present at the Conference last Sunday, the main division that appeared between Common Wealth and Communist delegates was that the former concentrated almost exclusively on the electoral and post-war issues, while the Communists wanted to put the first emphasis on united policy about coal, production and other immediate issues for the war itself.

* * *

The "quite ordinary case of fraud," as the Recorder called it, which ended at the Old Bailey on Monday in sentences upon four people for conspiring to contravene the Witchcraft Act, 1735, was extraordinary to the onlooker, because of the large number of intelligent people (there were well over 100) who came forward as witnesses to the genuineness of the séances arranged by the prisoners. I understand that the case will go to the Court of Criminal Appeal, partly on the question whether the Witchcraft Act, 1735, which penalises those who "pretend to exercise or use any kind of witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration" can properly be applied to spiritualists. Comment on this is, therefore, precluded. But I have heard several people express the view that the Recorder should have allowed the defendants to stage a séance in Court, as they wanted to do; no doubt because, when you do not happen to be in the dock yourself, the play's the thing. This delightful idea amounted to proposing that the judge should resort to a medieval "trial by ordeal" and in fact invite the jury to abdicate. If the séance turned out a flop, the case for the prosecution would be proved, and the jury, sworn to try the issue "well and truly" by the processes of the modern trial, would be confronted with a *fait accompli* when their job was just beginning!

* * *

A well-known American intellectual visiting this country pushed a £1 note into the hand of a friend and asked him to buy the most important book on politics that had appeared in England during the last three years. Would E. H. Carr's *Conditions of Peace* do? No. Anyway, he knew that. Laski? No, that would not serve. After that the friend searched his mind, and then the bookshops, and decided that there really had been no important book on politics in England in the last three years. I am shocked to find how nearly I agree.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to A. Clifton-Taylor.

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There is a tremendous atmosphere about the Via Appia, and beauty too. . . . It was a good place for little English dogs to have a run when they lived in the city.—*Country Life.*

What attitude on the part of British girls is most calculated to keep Americans at their best level of social behaviour?—From A.B.C.A. discussion notes.

Opera in Britain, whatever it may be elsewhere, is an exotic plant. "Fashion" alone has kept it so long on its tottering legs. On its own merits it can never thrive in a land in which robustious baritones are a rare and rather ludicrous species. It is increasingly an alien in a land which loves active, open-air pastimes.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph.*

Defendant at Old Bailey yesterday: "I thought the three barrels in my yard contained tar. I was astonished when the police found they were filled with whisky, rum, and wine."—*Daily Mirror.*

REGIONAL PLANS FOR BRITAIN

No post-war Government — even one that is Socialist—can afford to disregard the fundamental change that has taken place in our economic fortunes. Britain is still precariously dependent upon international trade. Since there is no chance of regaining the old industrial supremacy, any serious discussion of Britain's future place in world economy must begin with a careful estimate of our resources and economic capacity and seek new means of using them.

What, then, should statesmen do if they intend to fulfil all their promises about post-war security and prosperity? As far as home affairs go, there seem to be two clear tasks, which are complementary. First, British industry must be reorganised to take full advantage of the great advances in technical and scientific knowledge which have been made in the war and the years preceding it. This may mean a partial shift in the main weight of our production from the heavy to the light industries, and to a new and more efficient use of the old resources and technique, for it seems as if engineering is moving more and more towards an extensive use of the non-ferrous metals and plastics. This question of plastics, of course, in turn involves a careful consideration of the use to which we put coal, easily the most valuable of our national resources. When coal yields a host of essential by-products, can we afford to use nearly 80 per cent. of our annual consumption merely for fuel? Clearly we have not yet developed the generation of electricity—especially hydro-electric power—on anything like the scale that is necessary. Electricity, moreover, is a flexible source of power. If it is produced on a sufficiently large scale it can feed rural industry and agriculture as easily and cheaply as it supplies the mass-production plant.

The second main task in the post-war period is the creation of a prosperous home market. There is fairly general agreement that in one way and another this means massive State-expenditure. To-day, it is not only the Socialist economists who claim that theoretically, at least, it is possible to create an economy of full employment. And there seems to be agreement that one of the pre-conditions for it is planned State enterprise on a considerable scale. This prospect must be faced by any Government that is in earnest about reconstruction.

But to judge from recent speeches of the Prime Minister and Lord Beaverbrook, as well as from the whole record of Mr. Churchill's administration in domestic affairs, it looks increasingly unlikely that it will ever have the courage or imagination to accept this approach. It seems to prepare for peace with the same niggling timidity that Mr. Chamberlain prepared for war. Yet plan there must be. No one who knew South Wales or Durham between the wars can doubt it.

At the beginning of this Parliamentary session, Mr. Ellis Smith, the Labour M.P. for Stoke, suggested in the House that the Morecambe Bay district should be considered as presenting suitable conditions for what he called a "miniature Tennessee Valley Authority." By means of a causeway across the bay, Lancashire might be linked to the Cumberland coast. Not only would this offer a new and quicker route to Barrow but within the enclosed area there would be facilities for a terminal for the Trans-Atlantic air service. It is possible that the tide could be harnessed by means of sluices and turbines to provide hydro-electric power which could serve industry in North-West England and help in the establishment of new centres of rural and light industry. Linked with a National Park in the Lake District, the whole region would provide a great centre of recreation. Though Mr. Ellis Smith was not categorically asserting the need for such a plan in this area, he was certainly drawing attention to one of many possibilities. But if it is left at that nothing more will be heard of the idea again.

What has been the history of proposals like this in the last twenty years? Perhaps the most revealing episode of this kind in the whole period during which British capitalism has been breaking down, is the treatment of the Severn Barrage scheme. This is easily the largest capital project of its kind in Britain. Government after Government has investigated it, considered it and promised further investigation. It has, in fact, become the hardy perennial of two decades of frustrated planning. Almost every Government since the last war has trotted it out as a cure for economic depression, paraded the scheme before its critics as a token of its good intentions and then returned it to its pigeon-hole after the immediate crisis has passed, plus a new mass of minutes and evidence.

To-day, it is again under investigation, along with a number of other plans, all of which, no doubt, are to be carried out "if the state of national finances at the time permits." Answering a question by Lord Brabazon last March, Lord Templemore said of the data already accumulated: "the mass of valuable information acquired in the course of the investigation holds an unchallenged place as a classic in hydro-electric literature." Major Lloyd George has evidently decided to refresh our acquaintance with the classic. In December, 1943, he set up a committee of experts "to review the conclusions of the Severn Barrage Committee in the light of later engineering experience and to suggest modifications in the proposed scheme." While we await the report, which is to include a programme for the execution of the plan and an estimate of its cost in the basis of the wartime rise in costs, we are assured that fishing rights in the Severn and Wye are to be given due consideration!

The scheme itself is of unusual interest. Apart from the employment of several thousand men in its construction, the barrage would provide a large and cheap supply of electrical energy from the tide. As well as releasing coal for more valuable purposes, this electricity could help establish new industries, not only in the valleys of South Wales, but throughout the West of England. There would certainly be surplus power which could be used in the Midland and the London industrial areas. The road and rail routes across the dam would improve communications with South Wales beyond recognition, as anyone who has had to make the long and exasperating detour via Gloucester will well realise. Above the dam, a tideless port with an area of twenty-seven square miles would be created, with a consequent extension of dock facilities below Bristol and Avonmouth. These docks might well lead to a revival of canal traffic in Southern and Western England.

The vital point is whether it is technically possible to generate electricity from the tide. Though the Severn has certain peculiar characteristics—there is a five-hour flow and seven-hour ebb to each tide—without some provision for storage the project would break down through the same difficulty that has hitherto prevented the use of tidal rivers for hydro-electric generation. For however great the peak output may be potentially, it will be wasted unless it meets the peak demand. Tides cannot be arranged to coincide with hours of labour. The Severn scheme proposed to avoid this snag by the provision of two power plants, the main one to be situated in the dam itself, the other, an auxiliary dual-purpose plant on the Wye near Tintern. When the main generators are working, especially if this did not coincide with the peak hours of demand, some of their power would be used to pump water into an artificial lake in the hills above Tintern Abbey. This stored water could then be released to feed the smaller station at low tide and to supplement the main station when necessary. The idea has always had sound backing from experts working for the Government, who have repeatedly said that there is no natural obstacle to its achievement which they could not overcome.

No natural obstacle. Yet ever since 1920, when the proposal was put forward by the Water Power Resources Board working for the Ministry of Reconstruction, Government departments have been playing with it. Killed by the Geddes axe; revived in 1924 and again in 1930, the plan came to a head with the report of the Severn Barrage Committee in 1933, which put forward a perfectly sensible and attractive summary of the whole business. Since then the matter has rested there. Why? There was certainly some considerable opposition in the region: local authorities with heavy public utility commitments, feared not only the loss of their capital, but also the financial burdens which the construction of the barrage might involve. Bristol, especially, which was building a large steam generating plant, foresaw that for its expenditure it might be rewarded with a costly and obsolete undertaking. Dock interests, especially Newport Harbour, feared that in spite of the experts' verdict to the contrary, their docks would become useless through silting as well as through competition. But these are reasonable and legitimate objections, most of which could be met. What other reasons have been behind the procrastination and delay? The failure of the scheme is a reflection of the main causes of economic stagnation in Britain. Monopoly capitalism, faced with a contracting market and serious foreign competition, has sought the cure in a negative solution. Instead of positive and imaginative action, which could raise our productive and consumptive capacity and so do much to assure a better life for our people, big business found its escape from the toils of crisis in restriction of production, in wage cuts and the frustration of technical advance.

Mr. Ellis Smith is quite right in coining the slogan of regional plans for Britain on the lines of the T.V.A. Though he knows that to carry out such plans in a thorough-going way we should require democratically controlled State planning on a national and a regional scale—which means Socialism—it is not technically impossible for even a capitalist Government to initiate such schemes in any particular area. It is reasonable to ask for investigation and preparation of them now. Not only could they be worked out from a technical and sociological point of view and given a system of priorities according to the resources which it is estimated we shall have at the end of the war, but they could be graded to take the shock of the transition from a war to a peace economy. They do not necessarily imply Socialism; but a Labour Party which adopted them as part of its domestic programme would find in them a real beginning for its socialist planning when it became a government.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

ORDE WINGATE

No one who ever knew Orde Wingate doubted that he was an extraordinary man. It was not merely that he had courage and brains and relentless energy; what he did in Palestine and Abyssinia and Burma is sufficient proof of that. He was ambitious, but his ambitions were great ambitions. He asked nothing of those who served under him that he was not willing to perform himself. He hated cruelty and injustice and meanness of every kind. He fought for the things in which he believed with a passionate faith that swept him over the frontiers of talent into that mysterious hinterland we call genius.

He did not make his way easily. He was unconventional in his ideas. He did not accept any of the standard formulæ until he had tested them for himself. He had none of that easy adaptability which gives the professional soldier a smooth career. Where he had enthusiasms, the Jewish homeland in Palestine, the full liberation of Abyssinia, the fulfilment of our debt to China, he spoke of them forthrightly, without any regard

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for the status of those to whom he spoke. He thought it a soldier's business to be statesman as well as fighting man; so he was convinced that he must understand the people with whom he had to deal. For that reason he learned Arabic in the Sudan, and Hebrew while he was stationed in Palestine. He had never any respect for the second-rate, and he spoke his mind about the office-wallah who reaches high rank in the War Office with a frankness that did him no good. It is hardly a secret now that when he came back from his extraordinary campaign in Abyssinia his success against impossible odds did not add to his popularity in Whitehall; only the personal intervention of the Prime Minister prevented him from being sent, the greatest leader of guerrillas in the British Empire, to take charge of a second-line Ack-Ack battery in a remote district. He had caused offence to two or three of those dull eminences who can never forgive originality of ideas or forthrightness of utterance. How surely he justified Mr. Churchill's intervention the two epics for which he was responsible in Burma make massively evident. He began the war as an artillery captain; when he died he was, at forty-one, a Major-General, holding the D.S.O. and two bars. And he had made himself each stage of that swift ascent. He had brought to the tasks he undertook not merely the idealist's passion for perfection, but the faith in a great end which enabled him to bring out in all who worked with him some extra effort of courage and endurance which, before, they did not know they possessed.

Orde Wingate was a realist, tough, relentless, unbreakable. But he was a dreamer, too, with a mystic element in his character which drove him on in relentless development to an end he understood but could never have defined. He did not give himself easily, but when he did give himself he gave all that he was with a magnanimity that was almost reckless in its profusion. He read widely, and there was in him, half-shyly hidden yet omnipresent, the soul of a poet. I have heard men complain of his insistent silences, but I have listened to his tales of adventure, his portraits of men, his statements of principle, in hushed amazement at the unceasing torrent of eloquence that welled up into pictures that are unforgettable. He was a great soldier, who knew every aspect of his profession as the great artist knows every medium through which his expression may be fulfilled. But he was more than a great soldier. He was already a citizen of that greater commonwealth in which there is no denial of justice, and, not less for the humble than the eminent, the recognition of the right to freedom. For Orde Wingate, in a fundamental way, there was neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free. That was the battle in which he fought so urgently, and that was the cause for which he gave his life. No one who knew him will ever forget that it was grand to be his friend, and no one who is aware of what he achieved in so brief a span of years will doubt that even the vastness of this conflict cannot prevent his name from living in our history.

HAROLD J. LASKI

DRIED EGGS, ETC

One more new occupation has been invented as a result of the irresistible progress of civilisation. It is that of the professional dried-egg taster. In a recent lecture on dehydration at the Royal Society of Arts, Dr. Franklin Kidd stated that the taster awarded marks ranging from eight points for the egg with no apparent off-flavour to nought for those he considered repulsive or inedible." He also told the audience that "the taster was sometimes asked to give a second opinion on the same powder without being told it was the same," and that his second marking usually agreed with the first.

It is difficult not to envy the delicacy of palate that can thus distinguish between one sample of dried eggs and another. Most of us have by now eaten a few dried-egg omelettes and have come to the conclusion that, cooked by the same hand, all dried eggs taste monotonously alike. No doubt, however, the professional dried-egg taster enjoys a wider variety of choice than we, and in the course of his duties occasionally comes in contact with dried eggs that compete in flavour with the vintage "shell-eggs" (as we call them now) that used to be a subject of complaint in the Victorian teashop.

Though I envy the palate of such men of taste, I confess I should not like to take up tasting of any kind as a profession. The first professional tasters I ever saw were in the butter market and their activities seemed unpleasant. They would plunge a narrow metal scoop into a mass of butter and, withdrawing it, would put it to their mouths. Nibbling gingerly, they would wear a meditative air as they judged the flavour, and the rest of the butter would then be restored, with their tooth marks on it, to the parent mass. Customs may have changed in the last fifty years, but I still remember keenly how much at the time I disliked the thought of eating butter that had been patterned by a stranger's teeth. Nor should I have liked to be compelled for a living to spend my mornings eating butter with no bread to mitigate the greasiness of its texture.

I sometimes wonder whether the professional tasters of various schools get much pleasure outside working hours from the things they taste. Is the tea-taster, for example, ever an enthusiastic tea-drinker? It is said that at the close of his work his tongue is the colour of mahogany, and I suspect that, by then, the flavour of the finest Lapsang Souchong would be about as attractive to him as that of ammoniated quinine. I have read of a professional ham-taster who after thirty-eight years at his job still spoke of ham with enthusiasm. "I taste ham all day," he said to an interviewer, "and I never tire of it. I must have tasted a few million hams in my time. I stick the skewer in, pull it out, place it an inch under my nose, and get the rich flavour in my mouth. It's just like eating a rasher." Even this Gargantuan enthusiast, however, admitted that he seldom ate ham at home.

Are the wine-tasters equally sated, I wonder, with the good things they taste during their business hours? Most of the praise of wine has been written not by men who tasted it for a living, but by men who sipped and swallowed it for pleasure. The champagne-taster's approach to wine seems to me to be too intellectual to be productive of enjoyment. As he takes a little of the wine in his mouth and plays with it on his tongue before spitting it out, he is no epicurean but a judge, an examiner with an active brain thinking hard of the marks he must award. Champagne for him must connote not relaxation, but mental labour of the intensest kind, and, if his work continued all the year round, I can imagine his becoming a determined teetotaller outside his professional duties through hatred of wine.

The gourmet, it must be admitted, also approaches wine in the spirit of a judge, but he is an amateur judge, not a professional. He judges, not for profit, but for pride and pleasure. He likes to think of himself as an infallable Brains Trust about vineyards and vintages, and, as he airs his superior endowments, he is as happy as an amateur conjurer showing off his card tricks. It is said of some men that, though blindfolded, they can not only name any good wine they taste but gives it date. I have never been present when this was done, but I have known one or two men who were reputed to have the gift. Of one thing I am sure; there are fewer men who are judges of wine than men who fancy themselves as judges of wine.

Mr. T. A. Layton, himself a connoisseur of wine, told a disillusioning story about wine-judging in his book *Table for Two*. Once, he relates, he organised a small Bad Wine Exhibition and invited two of his friends to celebrate his horrible discoveries with him. He bought the cheapest wines he could obtain at various shops, including some Cyprus port, some British sherry, and some Chilian Graves. These wines, though many people would not call them bad, are at least not wines likely to be found in an epicure's cellar. Certainly Mr. Layton and his friends did not like them when the bottles were first opened. "Why," said Mr. Layton, after tasting the wine of Cyprus, "I could even smell the difference between that port and my port, even if I had a cigar in my mouth." After sampling a bottle of thoroughly bad Burgundy, he opened a bottle of Nuits St. Georges, and all agreed that the difference was immense and "stood out a mile."

Then Mr. Layton proposed an experiment. Two of the company were to go out of the room and, as soon as he had poured out six glasses of "bad" port and six of port that approached perfection, leaving no means of identification but the taste, smell and appearance, were to return and judge them. Having failed to identify the ports by smell, the judges tasted them, and one of them said: "There is no doubt that that is your worst," putting a fine vintage port at the bottom of the list. Mr. Layton himself then went out of the room, undertaking to judge the wines by smell alone. "When I came back," he confesses, "I put the vintage port as worst and the Cyprus port second from the top." Another of the company put the Cyprus port first. It is to be hoped that dried-egg tasters are less fallible in their judgment than wine-tasters.

Various tests have shown that human beings cannot trust their palates even to tell the difference between butter and margarine. Some years ago, more than six hundred people took part in a competition at Shepherd's Bush, and, after tasting slices of bread and sponge fingers, some spread with butter, and others with margarine, were invited to say which were spread with which. Only one of the competitors gave all the right answers, and, when he attempted to repeat his exploit, he, too, failed.

If there were Harley Street specialists offering to cure defects of taste as there are specialists who remedy defects of vision, it would probably be found that our palates are as imperfect in a variety of ways as our eyes. In extreme cases we may be able to taste nothing at all—a complaint known as agnesia. It used to be reported of a famous London physician that he had lost his sense of taste to the point of being unable to notice any difference of flavour between roast beef and potatoes. Everything tasted alike to him, or rather, nothing had any taste for him at all. "Taste-blindness" so complete as this is rare, but there must be innumerable cases of deficiency of taste corresponding to astigmatism, shortsightedness, longsightedness and the various ills that affect our eyes. In a more advanced civilisation, there will possibly be doctors making a living out of curing their patients of an antipathy to the flavour of oysters or parsnips or chutney or pig's trotters. If abnormal sight can be medically treated, why not abnormal taste? Why should sight and hearing be the only senses in regard to which the doctors can help us? The chief trouble is, of course, that, though every oculist knows, or thinks he knows, what is bad sight, no one has yet made it clear to us what is bad taste.

Even in the arts no authority throughout the ages has been able to tell us what bad taste is. Poems or paintings that to some people seem to have the morning brightness of fresh eggs seem to others merely "poisonous" and "rotten." There are no standards of normality, and, from the point of view of those who disagree with us, the rest of us are incurable. Perhaps, the psychiatrists of the future will discover some foot-rule of taste and will evolve a means of "conditioning" us into normality so that we shall all be able to enjoy the same things in the same year. I hope not. I should not like to see a world in which everybody could distinguish without a moment's hesitation between literary and artistic margarine and literary and artistic butter. We owe a considerable amount of pleasure to the

erraticism of taste—especially to the erraticism of other people's tastes.

Still, the men of science are at work investigating the sources of taste and the reasons why taste at one age differs from taste at another, and we never know what may happen. An American professor some years ago "counted 60,000 taste buds on the tongues of children, grown-ups, middle-aged and old people to find out why people enjoy eating certain foods at one period of their lives more than they do at others." According to him, the ordinary child is born with 328 taste-buds on its tongue, and these gradually disappear after we have reached the age of twenty, till at the slippered-pantaloon stage we have only about 100 taste-buds left. This, no doubt, explains why a child of ten, with all its taste-buds intact, prefers the taste of chocolate to that of whisky. Possibly the men of science of the future will discover the means of prolonging the life of our taste-buds and enable us to enjoy sweetmeats with a child's enthusiasm in preference to beer, wine and spirits till the end of our lives. Men who enter a public-house in those days will be looked on with pity by their fellow-citizens as decadent poor souls, who have lost most of their taste-buds, and the wiser part of the community with rejuvenated taste-buds will crowd roystering into the confectioners' shops.

Perhaps, however, just at the moment, most of us are rather lucky to have lost so many of our taste-buds. I do not envy the human being with a full complement of taste-buds eating a war-time fish-cake or a war-time Vienna steak. There is, unfortunately, no professional taster to save us from the worst of these. It seems to me that the professional dried-egg taster should have his counterpart in the preparation of all foods provided in the restaurants. But what a life he would have! A humane judge would be slow to condemn a convict to it. Y. Y.

THE MOVIES

"Le Jour S'Elève," at Studio One

Another "last film" out of France (let's hope there are more coming), and this time a brilliant example of the French method. A murderer has locked himself in on the top floor of one of those tall wedge-like buildings that give a rudimentary look to Paris suburbs; the police try to pick him off through the window, to rush the door; reinforcements are called out; soldiers disperse the crowd, which forms again; the only thing is to smoke him out; and, with daybreak, a fireman climbs over the roof and drops two tear-gas bombs into the room, when a final shot tells us that the drama is over. During this vigil of a night we have watched the murderer (Jean Gabin) pacing to and fro, crouching in a corner, chain-smoking (his last match has gone), staring into the mirror and at objects on the mantelpiece—a brooch, a teddy-bear. As he stares, the events of the last few months come back. The murdered man, who in the first minute toppled downstairs holding his stomach, is back on a café stage cracking his whip over a troop of performing dogs: a middle-aged actor, a sadist, a sentimentalist with power over women. Even in the distance on the stage one can remark the heavily spell-binding gaze, the prestidigitation of the hands. He has two women, a young girl and his stage partner, on whom he is working in different ways, and Gabin intrudes in time to deprive him of both. The clash between them (we are made to think of an old stag meeting the challenge) is bound to come soon, and it is the actor who takes a revolver to the room of his younger rival. However, he can't use it, he can only act (as he says) in the stage sense; and he leaves the thing lying handy, as he fanfaronades and juggles with the situation. So he gets shot, a murderee if ever there was one. This part is played with wonderful panache and skill by Jules Berry; he even overshadows Gabin when both are on the screen together. The two women (Jacqueline Lorent and Arletty), a waif and a woman of the world, act also well in character. What makes this film is character, the force of situation, the realism with which persons, rooms and objects are brought into a charmed circle. The love scenes, for example, perfectly done, are as essential as the accumulation of violence. In one respect this film marks a notable advance: the flash-back becomes here an instrument for focusing on the present, the focus growing sharper as the film goes on and yesterday's events come nearer to to-morrow's. The director is Marcel Carné.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Uncle Harry," at the Garrick

Virtuoso performances by Michael Redgrave and Beatrix Lehmann in a study of a suburban murderer placed in 1908. Mr. Redgrave is the provincial paranoiac, Miss Lehmann one of his adoring sisters and the second of his victims. Both the protagonists are artists who miss no detail in their characterisation—no movement is too small, no muscle too unimportant, no intonation too slight to be carefully calculated. All that acting, imagination (and hard work), can do to realise their characters, is done. Mr. Redgrave has the easier job, for his part is all "meat." But how brilliantly he shuffles, coughs and stoops through family tyranny to ineffective murder, poised throughout, chinless and seedy, on the edge of hysteria. One criticism: he slips over the edge too often. Too many sobs—they rob each other. Miss Lehmann's range has sometimes been criticised as narrow. A comparison of her spoiled, wilful, tricky girl in this play with her excellent Mrs. Alving of a few months ago should dispel this fallacy once and for all. She can even, it seems, diminish her height. The brilliantly finished detail, the perfection of control and movement down to the last turn of the head should establish her as one of our leading actresses. Miss Ena Burrill, as the elder sister, the first victim, made an excellent complement to her, and noticeable in smaller parts were Mr. Arthur Davis, Mr. Donald Finlay and Miss Rachel Kempson. We dwell on the acting because the play itself does not bear close examination: it is a vehicle such as actors need sometimes for an individual display. But it is just strong enough to support them without obtruding its flaws, and the direction by William Armstrong and Michael Redgrave assisted this. It is in place here to hope that such excellent actors will soon be seen again in intelligent plays, to move as well as to amuse us.

"IN A VALLEY OF THIS RESTLESS MIND"

I think now of latitudes solitary, Asian, and velvet,
Even while the mechanised ants march to their jungle attack,
Moving to that complete south where birds of paradise flee
In their scarlet and gold to the mating shelter of palms.

And as if wandering beneath the giant skies of the Cross
Dissolved in the immeasurable vault that everywhere penetrates the ocean,
I am borne onward through the undark where like snowflake silently
The white body of albatross or seaplane glides down to the swell.

Even more I am haunted by world girdling cables
Encrusted by coral and shells, along which flash messages:
Even more I am haunted by those cables tapped by deepsea creatures,
Girdling far down on the tideless sands, girdling and gripping.

Above this the mechanised ants march and birds of paradise flee
In their scarlet and gold to the mating shelter of palms.
Above this again tier upon architectural tier of a dusking vault
Lit by a lonely wing, gliding small as snowflake and as silently.

EWART MILNE

Correspondence

BASIC ENGLISH

SIR,—Many of the objections raised against Basic English in the press seem frivolous and contentious to the practical mind.

I know very little about Basic save what interest in a fascinating and ingenious invention has disclosed, and speaking merely as a member of the English-speaking race, I ask myself, what is its use to me?

I should use it to simplify the expression of my thought when communicating with those to whom my ideas in free English would appear involved or incomprehensible, or are unfamiliar—whether I were addressing a foreigner, a person of poor intelligence and education, or a child. And I should further use it to simplify my thought to myself. In this respect it has for me (1) a common-sense and practical value, and (2) an intellectual one.

The very richness of the English language tends to obscure sense in argument, dissertation or analysis. It would not hurt most of us to be disciplined by the use of a recognised form of simple statement when required. If I were explaining the Atlantic Charter to a child, or an adult with a limited vocabulary I should never dream of using a word like "aggrandisement" without translating, or at least "dissecting" it.

Why Mr. Brailsford should suppose only a highly trained linguist could avoid confusion in using simple language to others if he happened to possess a rich vocabulary himself, I cannot see. We all use simple language to children, and it does not prevent them from adopting a richer form of speech as they grow older and their range of thought widens; nor does it lessen our own. Likewise with foreigners. I have had to explain simple operations to black races and to Chinese coolies who had a limited knowledge of English and have had to employ words of simple origin and obvious meaning within their experience. I did not suffer confusion myself in avoiding it for them.

If I wanted to make love to somebody of limited understanding I should be grateful for any simple form that conveyed my feelings and many ways of expressing them are offered by Basic English. It is not suggested that Basic English should be the medium for, say, a passionate interlude between Virginia Woolf and Cyril Joad.

I am not an uneducated person, yet the White Paper containing the Atlantic Charter and Mr. Churchill's recent speech in the House came to me as a mental relief. After I had read the Basic versions I was satisfied that I should be able to expound and remember them. In their original form I should not have attempted to do either. L. C. M. RYND

46 Arthur Court, W.2.

SIR,—In his interesting article on Basic English Mr. Brailsford says: "English, if we will but reform its spelling, is a much easier language than any of these. We shall gain nothing by mutilating it or simplifying it." I suggest that there is a contradiction here. If we write about: "plowing thurrally thru the ruff, doelike soil," our language is badly mutilated in the name of a somewhat dubious simplification. Mr. Brailsford deplores the desire for haste in learning a language. "Is two months really all the time we have to give?" Then why be lazy over spelling? The orthographic individuality of our English words is an essential feature of our mother-tongue.

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As a race we spell with inspiration, and none can beat us for variety, unexpectedness and ingenuity. Philistines are mentioned in the article quoted, as being in league with Basic English. Has the author not perhaps considered the havoc that new spelling would produce in poetry?

In any case there is a practical problem. If spelling must conform with pronunciation, whose pronunciation shall we use, ours or the Americans? (A word like "got" will then be spelt "gat," and so on.) American has claims as the older diction, but if we must use a more recent development, shall it be London Cockney? (Heaven defend us from the "Oxford" accent!) If all other British dialects are to be at once stamped out, our tongue will be reduced to poverty indeed.

6 Lytton Avenue, JOAN HYDE
Letchworth, Herts.

THE FALLING BIRTH-RATE

SIR,—I have read the article on the birth-rate published in your issue of March 11th and this elaboration of minor causes, together with the appointment of a Royal Commission to further obscure the obvious truth, makes one wonder whether the national inclination to distrust the simple and apparent is not becoming a dangerous disease.

Is it not painfully clear to any uncluttered, unofficial mind that the decline in the birth-rate is due to increased education, especially of women, and only very incidentally to economic factors, birth control and diet? As to sub-fertility, I maintain that women capable of full-time factory work and service in the Forces are equally strong enough to endure the physical servitude and mental imprisonment inflicted by incessant child-birth; but they are disinclined to do so. Clearly, since smaller families and not childless marriages are the chief cause of the reduction in births, the suggestion of mass-sterility is refuted. The proportion of cases where the number of births is limited by nature and not by individual choice is relatively small.

Where the birth-rate is highest the emancipation of women is least conspicuous, as in China or India, and, naturally, vice versa. In more enlightened areas women find a life of the mind open to them and means of limiting the number of adorable but undeniable millstones the gratification of natural emotions may hang round their necks. Risking the wrath of the Romantics, I assert that few people marry to produce children. They marry for love, and children have been an incidental consequence. I am not inferring that children are unwanted, but many are, and it is the *wanted* children who matter, and the drop in unwanted children that accounts for the drop in births. Intelligent women resist the health ruining mass-production which the cow seems better designed to stand.

Size of family being a matter of choice, potential parents apply the yardstick of the conditions into which their children will be born. They observe a world harassed by wars, slumps, unemployment and bitter competition in all spheres; a world in which science has exposed boundless opportunity to new generations, stressed the necessity of scientific upbringing, radically altered the mass conception of relations between parent and child and yet still provides an economic structure which forbids any enjoyment of these advances except to a limited few in direct ratio to income; a world which cannot feed, clothe or employ its citizens and kills the cream of its youth at regular intervals. Is it surprising they are sceptical as to the advisability of *increasing* the number of those citizens, especially when they observe that those countries with the highest birth-rate suffer the lowest standard of living?

So the socially conscious parent, sceptical of the socialised world within their children's time, limited as to income, thank God for contraception so that the family may be limited to the ability to rear them in clean, healthy surroundings, properly fed, clothed and educated.

It will not be denied that in Britain, as elsewhere, the most fertile class is also the poorest and by no means the fittest. All propaganda to the contrary, the large, poor urban family, stripped of its "backbone of the nations" halo, raising its brood in filth, with incorrect and insufficient food and without segregation, is the most powerful argument for more education, more contraception and a better, healthier and more literate race. Fewer in numbers, yes; but will this affect anyone beyond the lusters after power, markets and cannon fodder?

Contraception is the inevitable "insurance without sacrifice" with which disenchanted but enlightened children in the wilderness proclaim their lack of faith in the millennium and their right to a natural life freed from slavery to nature. J. E. SPIERS

FILMS

SIR,—Since Mr. Nicholas Davenport accuses me, along with other critics of the article "Films Across the Sea," of new mis-statements, may I be permitted to reply to the only point among the number I raised which he singles out to contest.

It is true that if the American film wheat is separated from the American film chaff (a process which cannot be too much encouraged), the average British film does not take twice as much as the average American "A" film, but Mr. Davenport is surely not suggesting that what he calls "the British exhibitors' craze for a double-feature programme" is responsible for all the awful American "B" pictures which the British public are obliged to sit through, and which indeed are no credit to the country which produces them. The fact is, of course, that it is the American exhibitors who demand a double-feature programme, and these cheap-quality films are made primarily to satisfy the requirements of American cinemas. Having made their profit in the United States, they are then dumped—almost duty-free—on to this market, and the renting rights in the United Kingdom sold for absurd prices, often as low as a few hundred pounds.

Naturally, British film producers are utterly unable to compete with this condition which has persisted for so many years that to-day it seems to be taken for granted. It is a pity that this film junk occupies so much screen playing-time in this country that might, in other circumstances, be filled by more sincere and worth-while British efforts.

If the Government chose to put an *ad valorem* duty on imported films this situation would be changed immediately, which I feel would be, in the very best sense, in the interests of both Britain and America.

FRANK LAUNDER
Hon. Secretary, Screenwriters Association
Briarlea House,
Mortimer, Berks.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

SIR,—"Critic" has recently both criticised the local Labour Movement and given it a good tip. We should like to say that we are concerned about both. The criticism does not apply here. True that, unlike South Kensington, our Party is practically unanimous in its opposition to the electoral truce, and this year we have, for the second time, submitted a resolution to Annual Conference opposing it, but we are not inactive. In the last year we have held fifteen public meetings in the division, for the last eight months we have canvassed every Sunday morning in Kingston without a break except on Boxing Day. The Labour Party membership in the division is up as a result from 250 to 1,000. Last Sunday we had Arthur Greenwood to the Kingston Empire and sold 1,200 tickets by the day before the meeting. With a collection of £15 and the sale of tickets we raised something like £85.

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—*Tablet*

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JONATHAN CAPE

THE VIRTUES OF EXAMINATION

SIR,—One point seems to arise from this correspondence that should be answered, and it can hardly be dealt with in the scope of a letter. Some of the progressive schools (particularly A. S. Neill's Summerhill) have been in existence long enough to have a fair number of middle-aged pupils. Are these people proving psychologically more healthy and better equipped mentally in dealing with the problems of this tough century than those of us who faced the world armed only with the leaving certificate and the "technique for acquiring dull facts"? Neill should give us a detailed report on some of his ex-pupils, and then we can judge Joad's implication that for twenty years Summerhill has been turning out pupils unprepared for the realities of the outside world—job-hunting, passing exams., flying Spitfires, and so on.

Finally, as he appears to think it relevant, Joad is wrong in saying Russell did not manage to keep his school going. Russell left some years before the school closed. I went down in 1935 and saw the kids (average age about ten) do a play in German, acted, written and produced entirely without adult aid. Unfortunately my German, learnt at a conventional dull fact-acquiring school, is so bad that I could not tell Joad whether they had their irregular verbs right or not.

A. S. O'CONNOR

SIR,—As the indirect cause of this controversy, may I be allowed to refer to one point in Mr. Curry's letter, namely, his quotation from Whitehead that "the pupil's mind is a growing organism," and "the ordered acquirement of knowledge is the natural food for a developing intelligence." This widely held idea is reminiscent of the Norwood Committee's "child-centred education" and is, I believe, quite inadequate as a basis for educational theory.

The doctrine that Dr. Joad was attacking appears to me to envisage children as plants or animals which, if placed in a suitable environment, will grow into nice healthy specimens. It ignores the fact that we are dealing with human beings who differ from other developing organisms in possessing conscious and reflective minds—which are the main concern of education. These minds seem to depend for their development almost entirely on contact with other minds through social life inside and outside the classroom. Competition, imitation, co-operation are aspects of this social life which are utilised by teachers, whether at Dartington or a big day school, but which are left out of account when the pupil's mind (or intelligence) is likened to a growing organism (a caterpillar, say) feeding on "the ordered acquirement of knowledge." Hence arguments based on this inadequate analogy may well be false.

I will not use your space to discuss Mr. Curry's remarks about examinations, because he makes statements whose truth I have been at pains to deny in the book which Dr. Joad was reviewing and which Mr. Curry has obviously not read.

11 Parker Street, Cambridge.

J. L. BRERETON

THE POLISH GOVERNMENT

SIR,—Your friend who is doing research on Polish affairs will take, perhaps, an interest in the following data. They give the composition of a single under-unit—an under-unit I know only too well and have known for too long a time. It constitutes a part of a larger unit trained for a technical service.

The unit contains 2 captains, 3 lieuts., more than 30 s/lieuts., 11 sergeants, about 20 corporals and 1 corporals and 10 privates. These figures do not include the very large cadre of instructors, both real and fictitious. All these ranks are, of course, vain titles in so far as real activity is concerned. But they imply full pay and advantages according to British standards. The most startling is the number of s./lieutenants. Almost all of them got their commission only a few months ago, shortly after the appointment of the new Commander-in-Chief. The generous act of the new Commander has been widely commented on here, and in a very favourable way. Intended to be either an incentive for young men to remain in the permanent army (of the future!) or a reward for descendants of good families, the general's munificence served at any rate the purpose of reinvigorating the old clan. Out of the five men to have an academic degree in matters relative to our technical service only one is an officer and three are privates. All three are Jews.

The composition of my under-unit is perhaps exceptional. Yet, a second one attached to the same unit is built on a very similar pattern. But the very strange things begin only higher. At the higher level offices, courses, posts and functions are maintained in a continuous process of making and unmaking. Majors and colonels are kept busy turning out schemes and reports and orders and counter-orders that mean nothing and concern nobody. Each has a room of his own, a staff of young officers and N.C.O.s and—I presume—a right to spending. One must go back to the late Spanish army of Alfonso XIII to find a similar record of venerable, idle greatnesses.

The Government, and still more the influential people outside it, apply to internal affairs a sort of principle of legitimism. Former officials have a right to new offices of equal standing. Holders of military ranks remain, though their armies have gone. Decency requires that the horrors of unemployment should be spared to the distinguished crowd. Yet another concern is the pureness of the clan. Its continuity is cared for by bringing up a new generation in the same old spirit of false glory and false pretension.

When a ruling class bases its claims on the amount of service done, there is only half a misery. But when discredited rulers, at a time of extreme national misfortune, busy themselves chiefly with the mean tasks of preserving caste privileges and seeking personal comfort—what do they deserve if not the most genuine contempt?

A POLISH PRIVATE

AN ACT OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

SIR,—Why is it that the provision in the Education Bill for introducing a daily act of worship into the curriculum of the schools of the nation rouses Professor Laski to such a pitch of incoherence as is evidenced by his article under the above heading? For the fallacy of his line of reasoning is easily exposed. He claims that religion stands or falls by its proved capacity to promote reforms in the social sphere. He must remember, however, that this plea is double-edged. If religion is to be regarded as primarily instrumental to a progressive policy of social reform, it can legitimately be equally regarded as primarily instrumental to a reactionary policy of the maintenance of the established order. But to judge religion by its effectiveness in either direction is to misunderstand its essential nature. Religion is not primarily an instrument of policy, retrogressive or even progressive. It is the channel of man's contact with God, with that supertemporal realm of ultimate reality which underlies and determines human life and destiny.

Moreover, there is a widespread agreement in this country that our children should grow up equipped with an awareness of that realm, as mediated and interpreted by the Christian faith, which, however far Professor Laski may regard its historical foundation as "dubious," has in fact provided for centuries the spiritual background of English life and character. Hence the proposed provision that that faith shall be taught by those who hold it, in all our schools. And if it is obvious that there are dangers in a standard of religious instruction, provided and controlled by the State, it is precisely by the introduction into the schools of a daily act of worship that these dangers are best countered. For it is in worship, rather than in instruction, that religion finds its most fitting and appropriate context, not as an instrument of social policy, but as the expression of man's dependence on God.

P. A. MICKLEM

Provost's House, Derby.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

We walk down a street in the dead hours of the afternoon, looking at the windows of the cottages as we pass by. They are glass cases; they are the domestic aquarium, and what our idle eye is seeking, is a sight of the human fish within. And presently we are taken by surprise. We see a face in one of those rooms. Agape, bemused, suspended like some torpid trout, a man or woman is standing alone there, doing nothing and sunk in the formidable pathos of human inertia, isolation and ennui. It is always a surprising sight and, to a novelist, always disturbing. We are used to the actions of human beings, not to their stillness. We are taken back suddenly to our childhood, when time went by so slowly, and when we were shut in a room with an adult who was occupied entirely by the mysterious, enormous process of sitting. How they could sit! And sit alone! And how their figures grew larger and larger in our eyes, until their solitude and silence seemed to burst the room. It was, I think, one of the first intimations of mortality in early childhood.

The Russian novelists of the nineteenth century owe everything to their response to the man or woman sitting alone in his room, to the isolation, inertia, the off-beat in human character. They are naturally aware of what André Malraux has called, in a recent book, "the crevasse that separates us from universal life." The chief subject of the Russian novelists—the monotonous life of the country house which is scores of miles from its neighbours—draws this response from them. And as they stand alone in the room, drumming their fingers on the window and looking out at the slow, cumbrous changes of cloud in the Russian sky over the steppe, the characters of the Russian novel fill out with the wasted hours of life. Loneliness intensifies character. The great personages of literature have so often been the isolated natures who overflow into the void that surrounds them, who transcend their personal lives and expand until they become prototypes. The Russian novel abounds in such figures. Oblomov is an example. Stefan Trofimovitch in *The Possessed* is another. Indushka of *The Golovlyov Family* belongs to this category. One is tempted to say that the novel is alive only when it creates these abnormal, comprehensive people. But in saying this, it is important to note one difference between the Russian figures and those of the West. Those strong-minded, bossy, tyrannical Varvara Petrovnas and Arina Petrovnas who honk their way through Russian life like so many vehement geese; those quietly mad, stagnant, frittering men who spend their time dodging these masterful women, are different from the English eccentrics. Our eccentricity or excess is a protest against the pressure of society; the Russian excessives of the nineteenth century were the normal product of a world which was so lax that it exercised no pressure at all. "We Russians," Shchedrin wrote, "are not drilled, we are not trained to be champions and propagandists of this or that set of moral principles, but are simply allowed to grow as nettles grow by a fence." Indushka and Oblomov are natural fungi of a neglected soil. They grow by running rife and they derive their force not from private fantasy alone, as Pecksniff or Micawber do, but from the Russian situation. They are puffed out by the sluggish, forgotten hours and days of the steppe. For in the empty hours and the blank distances which separated them from their neighbours, all the fate, the history, the significance of Russia itself, is gazing back at their gaping eyes.

After reading *The Golovlyov Family* one sees why a character like Indushka, the liar and humbug, is greater than Pecksniff who is, I suppose, the nearest English parallel. Indushka is greater because he has Russia inside him, and because he is encumbered with the dead weight of human dullness and vulgarity. He is greater because he is a bore. I do not mean that Indushka is boring to read about. I mean that Dickens had no notion that Pecksniff was a boring and vulgar man; Dickens saw the dramatic and absurd *outside* of the whited sepulchre only. Shchedrin did not stop at the farce of human hypocrisy, for the tricks of hypocrisy are really too crude and blatant. Shchedrin went on collecting the evidence with the patience of one of those static realists like Richardson; and he presently came upon the really terrible thing in Indushka's character. We can laugh (Shchedrin seems to say) at the obvious hypocrisies of Indushka and, like his neighbours, we can grin at his eye-rolling, his genuflections and his slimy whimsicalities; but there is something more serious. The real evil is the moral stagnation in Indushka's character. The real evil is the muddle, the tangle of evasions, words, intrigues by which he instinctively seeks to dodge reality. We forgive his sins; what eludes forgiveness is the fact that his nature has gone bad; so that he himself does not know what he is doing or saying. He is a ghastly example of self-preservation at any price. In middle age he is befuddled by day-dreams. He will pass a morning working out how much money he would make out of milk if all the cows in the neighbourhood died except his own. He has worked out the most detailed but essentially ridiculous systems of bookkeeping, and imagines that he is working. Less and less is he able to face any decision, however small. He is a hive humming with activity—but it is the buzz of procrastination. I do not ever remember seeing such a picture of our character in any English novel; yet the humbug's art of evading an issue by confusing it is a universal one. There is one remarkable picture of Indushka's evasion in the account of his behaviour to the servant girl whom he has got with child. Indushka manages never to admit that the child is his, but allows everyone around to say it is. His own reaction is to groan and to say "This is unbearable"—subtly conveying that his sufferings, not his act, are the unbearable thing. Indushka reaches the sublimity of self-deception here. He has achieved detachment and isolation from his own actions. And the strange thing is that we begin to pity him at this point. He feels an agony and we wince with him. We share with him the agony of being driven back step by step against the wall and being brought face to face with an intolerable fact.

There is nothing notably remote from our experience in *The Golovlyov Family*. Neither the emancipation of the serfs which stupefies Arina Petrovna, nor the fact that one is reading about a remote, semi-feudal estate, makes the book seem exotic or alien to us. Our own Arina Petrovnas do not starve their sons to death, but they have driven some to alcoholism; our own Indushkas do not publicly drive their sons to suicide. But, in the main, we must be struck by the essential closeness of Shchedrin's novel to the life of the successful middle class in England. Indushka's prayers for guidance have a sinister echo. Walter Bagehot, I believe, said that the mind of the business man lived in a kind of twilight and the character of Indushka is a remarkable example of a man whose cunning requires an atmosphere of vagueness and meaningless moral maxims. He has the stupidity of the slippery. In the end, it is not so much his wickedness that shocks his nieces, as the fact that he has become such a talker, such a vulgar babbler and bore. Cucumbers, pickles and the mercy of God indiscriminately mix in his mind. He bores one of the girls out of the house; and one of the most terrible chapters in the book is that one towards the end when the girl comes back to his house to die and wonders whether she can bear to spend her last weeks in the house of a man who never stops drivelling on and on about trivialities. She can tolerate him only by persecuting him. This picture of the triviality of Indushka's mind is Shchedrin's master stroke.

The Golovlyov Family has been described as the gloomiest of the Russian novels. Certainly the characters are all wretched or unpleasant, and the reader of novels who professes that strange but common English attitude to literature: "Would I like to meet these people?" must leave the book alone. Shchedrin's book is not gloomy; it is powerful. It communicates power. It places an enormous experience in our hands. How many of the realists simply indulge in an orgy of determinism and seek only the evidence that indicates damnation. Shchedrin does this up to a point, but he is not looking for quick moral returns. His method is exhaustive and not summary. Old Arina Petrovna is a tyrant, but her lonely old age has its peculiar rewards. She enjoys guzzling with Indushka, she adores his boring conversation; she is delighted to queer his pitch when he seduces the servant girl. The compensations of life are not moral; they are simply more life of a different kind. Here are the last years of her life:

> She spent the greater part of the day dozing. She would sit down in her armchair in front of a table on which smelly cards were spread out, and doze. Then she would wake up with a start, glance at the window, and without any conscious thought in her mind, gaze for hours at the wide expanse of fields, stretching into the distance as far as the eye could see. Pogorelka was a sad-looking place. . . . But as Arina Petrovna had lived all her life in the country, hardly ever leaving it, this poor scenery did not seem dismal to her, it touched her heart, stirring the remains of feeling that still smouldered in it. The best part of her being lived in those bare, boundless fields, and her eyes instinctively turned to them at every moment. She looked intently into the distance, gazing at the villages soaked with rain that showed like black specks on the horizon, at the white churches of the countryside, at the patches of shadow cast by the wandering clouds on the sunlit plain, at the peasant walking between the furrows, and it seemed to her that he never moved at all. But she did not think of anything or, rather, her thoughts were so disconnected that they could dwell on nothing for any length of time. She merely gazed and gazed until the drowsiness of old age began to ring in her ears, covering with a mist the fields, the churches, the villages, and the peasant walking far away.

No, Shchedrin is not gloomy because he does not soften. He undertakes to scald us with the evidence; he does not pretend that it will make vulgarity attractive or ignorance pretty. He is powerful because he remains severe. And so, at the end, when Indushka and his niece, after their awful drunken quarrels, suddenly admit their despair to each other, and Indushka makes the one truly heartrending cry of his life, we are moved beyond description. "Where are they all?" he cries, thinking of the mother, the brothers, the sons he has tricked and bedevilled into the very grave. He has felt the ice of his own coldness. It is a cry like Lear's. And it is all the more appalling that he utters this cry when his broken niece is still with him; if he had cried out when he was alone we would not believe. One had indeed not grasped it until then—the total disappearance of a family, the total disappearance of all that suffering and hatred. And the force of it is all the greater because we do not look back upon a number of dramatic intrigues capped by their scenes, but we see Russia in our mind's eye, the steppe, the little-changing sky, the distance of people from each other, and the empty hours of all those lives. The English novel of family life inevitably turns from such a pessimism, but not, I think, because the English family is or was any nicer than the Golovlyovs were. The middle class, up to now, have lived in an expanding economy, which has enabled people to be independent where they could not be indulgent. If that economy becomes static or if it is put on the defensive, then a different tale will appear. The story of our money and of our religion has yet to be written.

V. S. Pritchett

* *The Golovlyov Family*. By M. E. Shchedrin. Translated by Natalie Duddington. Everyman Library. 3s. 6d.

JUDAEA LIVES AGAIN

Judaea Lives Again. By NORMAN BENTWICH. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This book is a plenary and brilliant exposition of the Zionist thesis: a summary of pre-Mandatory Palestinian, and of world-Jewish modern, history; a detailed description of the material, civil-political and cultural development achieved; a presentation of events and the resulting situation between Jews and Arabs—with suggestions for the healing of "the Schism"; and an Epilogue: of The Hope—for the Regeneration of Judaism and of Judaea's Contribution to a Better World.

No happier choice could have been made for this timely recall to actuality in the Near East than of Mr. Bentwich, a Zionist who is also a "believing" Jew, a scholar with an attractive and interesting manner and, above all, with that urbanity which should inform all writing on highly controversial subjects. He can be pleasantly pungent: the Hebrew programme of the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation "fixes a correct accent, as the B.B.C. spreads the Oxford accent"—a double body-blow. He generalises with effect. "Jews are generally intolerant of facts which do not fit their ideas, British officials of ideas which do not fit existing facts." (He might have said "Britons," but for the unwritten Law of Zionist polemic that whereas British officials in Palestine must be, "Britons never, never, never shall be," blamed.) His mistakes are trifling. Transjordania (on the analogy of Ruritania) for Transjordan, and "Handel's" *Creation* can be remedied, and an index included, in subsequent editions. Mr. Bentwich is proud, but never fulsome or unctuous in his paean of Zionist achievement.

And Zion may well be proud, for she has grappled to her soul the unique chance afforded her by the British Mandate. Tel Aviv, planted incredibly on a desert strand, is a thronging throbbing city and seaport of universal activity. Jewish factories have provided not only the amenities of peace in food and clothing, up to silk stockings and cut diamonds but, in rapidly increasing measure, through instruments of precision and complicated machinery, the essential sinews of war. The Jordan (Hebrew for the "Descender"), harnessed by that great Jewish engineer and great man Pinhas Rutenberg, supplies annually for the lighting, domestic purposes, industry and irrigation of Palestine more than 100 million kilowatt hours. On the East, Milton's Asphaltic Pool exports potash, bromide and magnesium to the British Empire (its best client) through the Red Sea port of Aqaba; to the West, in the Mediterranean the Jewish blue and white pennon flutters over "the infant marine of Palestine." Even more remarkable—given the vulgar preconception of Jews as predestined and permanent urban usurers—is their devoted as well as intelligent cultivation of the sacred soil of the Holy Land. Many of the golden orange orchards, olive groves grey-green against their ochre-red earth, trailing drest vineyards, waving cornfields and well-stocked farms were twenty years ago wastes and marsh and arid dunes.

Even more arresting, partly because less publicised, is the "Hebrew Renaissance": the revival of the ancient Hebrew language in nursery, laboratory, academy, and football field—with ample showing already in the poems of Bialik, the Essays of Ahad Haam and the translations of Plato, Molière, Finnish Epics, Homer (into Hebrew hexameters), Heine, Byron and *The Hound of Heaven*, by Saul Tschernichovsky.

Supreme in the realm of interpretation, the Jewish virtuoso has been driven from the platforms of Central Europe, but *de son bannissement il tire son bonheur*, and the *maestri* of the world compete for the honour of conducting the Palestine Orchestra. Yet the crown of the Hebrew Renaissance is the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which, if only secluded from politics, may well become a spiritual influence throughout the Middle East. The author, its first Dean, well names it "the new sanctuary of Jewish life, a third temple"; quoting finely from the English Jewish poet Humbert Wolfe:

> "Somewhere in Jerusalem where Titus stormed in vain
> "The Temple of God commanded is risen up again."

No work *ad propagandam fidem*—it is "Judaea," not Palestine, that "lives again"—is concerned with matter alien to its own cause; nor need we search in these fascinating pages for any trace of the progressive embarrassments of the Mandatory, culminating in a minor war, due largely to the steepening of the immigration graphs, amounting in 1935 to nearly 62,000 of which admissions from persecuting Germany amounted to less than 16 per cent. Abuse would be foreign to Mr. Bentwich's temperament and he even admits, as regards the Arabs, that there may have been faults on both sides; but there is querulousness in his Part III, "The Home and the British Mandate." "Jews were from the outset dissatisfied with the action of the Mandatory Power." . . . "The admission of nearly 400,000 Jews in the period between the wars, which meant a raising of the Jewish population from one-tenth to one-third of the whole, might seem at first an adequate implementing of the obligation to facilitate immigration. In fact, however, the Government was constantly disappointing Jewish demands." . . . "Arab appeasement"—Munich's one legacy to political jargon (Arabs speak likewise of Jewish appeasement). Jewry has indeed suffered bitterest persecution. Zionists have had their first highest hopes deferred—diminished by successive re-definitions of an original charter (for an experiment unique in history) which would have been ideal in an uninhabited country. Yet, after all, laws and charters all over the world have to be amended when they hurtle head-on against these same peevish "facts." And what are they?

"Palestine has offered a home and a salvation for a remnant of the young and the old generation salvaged from the death-camps of the Continent of Europe: and it provides a hope and an example for the communities who live in lands of freedom and who, by their hope and example, are knit together." . . . Dr. Weizmann himself was able to proclaim four years ago: "What we have in Palestine to-day is a living organism which no force can stifle." In other words the National Home is established; in kind already if not yet to the ultimately expected degree. A candle has been lit which, please God, shall not be put out.

Nor, in an inflammable area which is more vital to the British Empire than Panama to the U.S.A., can it be allowed to cause a conflagration. When the Zionist slogan of 1931, "no political domination," becomes (in the Presidential Election year 1944) "a Jewish Commonwealth in an undivided Palestine"; when Mr. Ben Gurion, as Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency (which he has recently rejoined) is quoted as announcing that "the Jews themselves must have the Mandate of Palestine"; when in a book clearly written for both sides of the Atlantic the author goes on to propose that "the measure of Jewish immigration, the policy of land settlement . . . will surely be controlled by some authority . . . in place of the responsibility of the single Mandatory . . . the United States of America and the Soviet Union," so that "the policy in Palestine would not be a whirligig of British Imperial interests": . . . "the United States would be able to translate their criticism into constructive action"—then the British peoples who have borne the burden and heat of the Mandate (as of the War) from the beginning, may well feel that they "like not the security;" and the early premonitions of British Jewry as to the delicate and possibly invidious implications of extreme Zionism may seem to be justified.

Mr. Bentwich writes of the interesting and successful Soviet Jewish settlement scheme, and the large scale immigration into "the freedom loving countries"; thus admitting implicitly the truth that the problem of the settlement (in every sense) of Palestine and that of persecuted Jewry are two distinct and separate problems, though they sometimes overlap. But even he can write "the cry has gone up to heaven to find a place where they can . . . not be forced as helpless animals to the slaughter house" . . . "drove some thousands to seek *the only way of salvation*, which was in the National Home." If this last assumption should be justified it would constitute a shame and a disgrace to the sympathy-professing peoples who control the great open spaces of the world. The true remedy (possibly not intended) is indicated: "A comparison with the United States is illuminating." (It sure is.) "During the ten years preceding the first World War, America received a million Jews, Palestine 15,000. In the ten years immediately following the war, America received 340,000 and Palestine 100,000. From 1930 till 1939 Palestine received nearly 300,000 and the United States 100,000." Palestine is about the size of Wales.

Jews have now furnished convincing proof of their ability and willingness to till the soil—if given a fair chance. Is it for the "freedom-loving countries"—the British Empire and the United States—to show themselves less generous than their Russian Ally? And if, even to-day, charity is still said to begin at home, might they not enlarge their own quotas by a small percentage for desperate Jewry and, as the Arab wistfully suggests, "be generous at their own expense"?

RONALD STORRS

LIGHT VERSE

The English Book of Light Verse. Chosen by GUY BOAS. *Macmillan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The excuse for a new anthology must lie either in the subject or in the personality or taste of the author. Mr. Boas has chosen a hard-worked theme; for there have been, in recent years, several excellent collections of light and comic verse. One especially—Mr. Auden's *Oxford Book of Light Verse*—made the valuable distinction that lightness in verse isn't necessarily coy or artificial or funny, that it may include imagination as well as wit, gaiety of both heart and head. The light poem, in fact, can triumph, like the heavier poem, in its kind. As a result, Mr. Auden's choices raised us to a fresh climate, in which it was possible to be care-free and discriminating at the same time. Mr. Boas has gone back on these tracks, back to the bad old smart days. The "light verse" of his preference *has* a standard, but it is, I think, a meagre standard and one that has been superseded; too timid, at one end of the scale, of poetry and, at the other, of high spirits; guarding a prim propriety. Not that there aren't good poems here, but one catches sight of them as of fine houses round which a suburb has grown. The trim, tasteless rows extend:

> There was once a Dormouse who lived in a bed
> Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red),
> And all the day long he'd a wonderful view
> Of geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue),

until one wearies of a neighbourhood so bright, conventional and rootless. Milne Avenue glues the footsteps:

> It was silly, perhaps, but I *did* like the view
> Of geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue)—

and other streets, more or less inviting, dwindle on investigation to a similar prospect, even though the names go back to Milton and Chaucer.

How are we to explain a blight that seems to have spread over the whole volume? Mr. Boas gives us the hint in his very brief foreword. Some poems, he says, have been excluded on account of length, others "because a lack of verbal and metrical precision causes them to fall below the level set (comparatively recently) by W. S. Gilbert, Owen Seaman, and such contemporary practitioners as A. P. Herbert and E. V. Knox—a standard which only certain masters of the past anticipated." Anticipated! Shades of Blake and Shelley!—two of those excluded as being not, presumably, up to standard. Yet there are poems of Blake and Shelley that have a lightness incarnate like the flight of

birds; and Lyly and Marvell and Darley and . . . Why go on, though? They aren't here. They haven't the requisite address.

Here and there a timeless edifice, bursting the pattern, makes the wanderer stop and stare. Chaucer's *Tale of Chaunticleer*, Herrick, Dryden's Zimri (but I shouldn't call the strokes of this satiric portrait *light*), Gay's songs, the Toilet passage from *The Rape of the Lock*, Lear and Carroll, Calverley and Browning, Belloc and Miss Sitwell: if it were less of a built-up area, if it weren't for the neighbours, we should be beguiled to gaze at and around them.

One of the better features of *An English Book of Light Verse* is a genuine appreciation of the Victorians. The single choice from Browning, the ever-young *Youth and Art*, reveals possibilities in this kind of writing which have attracted later practitioners (ruled out, though, by Mr. Boas).

It once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on a house-top lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of a feather . . .

We studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I—soon managed to find
Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
And be safe in my corset lacing . . .

In the same line, Praed and Calverley have caught Mr. Boas's eye. Then why he didn't look a little further to discover, for example, the poetry of Mr. Betjeman, which adds delightfully to the nostalgia of this tradition? No Betjeman, no Auden, no Eliot or Plomer mar the smug whimsy of Mr. Boas's final pages. Here, every doorstep has been scrubbed white, every brass knocker gleams, dwarfs peep out of the laurel, there's a rockery, the tradesman has a back way and no one dares walk hatless out of the front: hawkers and street musicians, beware! But Mr. Boas doesn't seem to know all that is to be known about this neighbourhood of his; that, for example, its fashions can be traced back to Lear (watered down) and Stevenson. Stevenson is another of Mr. Boas's omissions: unaccountable, by the compiler's standards. The final defect of *The English Book of Light Verse* is that it doesn't add up; a scene from Shakespeare, a famous epigram, a puff of nonsense, a minor lyric, a fragment of parody or pastiche, shoulder one another in chronological order but in no other. However, good books are scarce. The lively reader will be able to make his own anthology from Mr. Boas's anthology, and he will be either very learned or very unlucky if it doesn't, despite all, yield some surprises and delights.

G. W. STONIER

GALLERY BOOKS

Velasquez, The Rokeby Venus. By NEIL MACLAREN.

El Greco. The Purification of the Temple. By ENRIQUETA HARRIS.

Edouard Manet. Un Bar Aux Folies-Bergère. By RAYMOND MORTIMER.

Gallery Books, Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Edited by PAUL WENGRAF. *Humphries.* 4*s.* 6*d.* each.

The purpose of this new series is, or appears to be, to take a single well-known picture, employ a critic or scholar to place it, describe and analyse, and to illustrate the critical essay, not only with black-and-white reproductions of the picture itself, as a whole and in detail, but also with photographs of cognate and influential works. Seemingly each essay will run to four thousand words or so, and may be supported by anything from a dozen to two dozen illustrations. Anyhow, each fascicule will consist of twenty-four pages.

It is impossible to infer from these first numbers what the rest will be like, for the three differ in everything almost except a will to be honest. There is no special pleading, and no one gives an impression of wanting to sell something. Mr. MacLaren has produced a scholarly article for scholars, which, nevertheless, will be read by the cultivated public with pleasure as well as profit. He has made clear the importance in the development of Velasquez' art of the transition from Seville to Venice, has indicated precisely the influence of the Italians in general and of Titian in particular, and has hinted at the not altogether negligible influence of Hellenistic sculpture. He has shown that this large, late and titularly mythological nude was doubtless intended for the royal collection. Acutely he has called attention to the *pentimenti*; and he has not been afraid to admit that the picture has been tampered with, or to remind us that the suffragettes cared as much about art as other and later savages. I am glad he recognises the possibility of Rubens having had a hand in the Spaniard's progress; and I wish he or someone else would give us an imaginary conversation between the two masters. After all, they spent the best part of 1628 together: they must sometimes have talked about painting.

Presumably Miss Harris writes for youngish students who hope to obtain posts as guide-lecturers or to write about art in the papers, though it may be doubted whether even these need to be told that the Spanish Armada was destroyed in 1588. Also, she does not write very well. However, in contrasting the National Gallery *Purification* with the picture in the Cook collection and the version in S. Ginés she has chosen a likely road which she has pursued intelligently. She knows what she is talking about; only, what she talks about is not always the most significant aspect of Greco's art.

Mr. Mortimer has written a delightful and instructive essay which will give a great deal of pleasure to art lovers and all well-educated people. He touches lightly but confidently on the development of Manet's style, on the social and literary history of the period, on painting in general and even on æsthetics, and gives a good account of the picture in question to boot. One could wish he had introduced a reproduction or two of cognate work, e.g. a Velasquez or a detail from Hals or from Courbet. Finally, since I wish the venture well and consider that, with these three numbers, it has made a promising start, may I give the editor one word of advice? We trust him to commission, as introducers or librettists, only people who have something to say; let him see to it that they say it pleasingly and properly. There is no reason, as Mr. Mortimer shows, why critics and scholars should write as though they were in the pay of the Government.

CLIVE BELL

WHITHER AMERICA?

The Future Economic Policy of the United States. By WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN, JR. *World Peace Foundation.* 50*c.*

It is a reasonable guess that for the next thirty or forty years the United States will possess economic predominance in the world. No nation will rival it seriously in the combination of productive capacity and technological skill; and no nation of the first order will possess in a degree so unimpaired so massive an economic power. Upon the use to which its pre-eminence will be put there depend, in large degree, both the speed of world-recovery, on the one hand, and, thereby, the chance of an enduring peace, upon the other.

Professor Brown writes as an analyst and not as

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a prophet. He is therefore concerned less to explain what the United States is likely to do than to list the choices between which it must thread its way. Any European observer will be grateful that he recognises with vigour that the domestic economic policies of his country have international ramifications of the first importance; and it is good to see the whole-hearted abandonment of the attitude of mind which, in the main, characterised the Coolidge-Hoover epoch.

Broadly, the policy he recommends is one in which the basis of organisation is free enterprise, with the recognition that the Government must interfere where there is the danger of mass unemployment. He accepts the need for the stabilisation of the dollar-exchange. He assumes the necessity for a unilateral reduction of American tariffs, with the assumption that Congress should encourage imports rather than exports. He is in favour of American participation in multilateral agreements in matters like ocean shipping and aviation, and in the organisation of international commodity controls. He looks forward to American investment in countries like Brazil, China and India. He supports a system of unemployment insurance along modified Beveridge lines. He agrees that the trade-cycle can be ironed out only by the co-ordination of the internal economic policies of the major Powers. While he does not think any one of his proposals sufficient to make commerce a way of peace rather than an instrument of war, he is of opinion that their cumulative effect may have that happy result in the end.

Professor Brown approaches his problems in a spirit of optimistic faith which the outsider will not find it easy to share. As long ago as 1927 the World Economic Conference at Geneva presented a unanimous report by some of the most distinguished economists living along these lines; nothing happened as the outcome of their recommendations except a spate of essays in the technical journals. What seems to be missing from this analysis is any discussion of the nature of the State and the legal relations it is the central function of the State to impose and to maintain. There is no *a priori* reason to suppose that the American State is different in its nature from other States. Anyone who has read reports like those of Mr. Blaisnell for the Temporary National Economic Committee will find it difficult not to conclude that Professor Brown has really written a skilful essay in the optative mood. He assumes, without discussion, that business-men have a passion for rational action, and that they are able, even willing, to take long-term views. Little of the economic history of the American business-man supports either of these assumptions. It is, on the contrary, difficult not to conclude from the history of the United States since Pearl Harbour that business-men have produced the machines of war in return for the surrender by the President of the main foundations of the New Deal. And, if this be the case, when the war is over the immense productive capacity of the United States is more likely to use the State-power for the attainment of profit than for laying the foundations of durable peace. At least Professor Brown ought to tell us why the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Chamber of Commerce are likely to show a deeper attachment to mass well-being than can be found in the recommendations of the F.B.I and Mr. Henry Brooke's mid-Victorian recommendations to the Tory Party.

HAROLD LASKI

A LIBERAL

Ramsay Muir. An Autobiography and some Essays. Edited by STUART HODGSON. *Humphries.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This is a somewhat scrappy book, though that is not the fault of the editor. It begins with an autobiography, but the autobiography ends in the year 1917, although Muir began to write it at the age of 68 in 1940. It therefore omits the most active twenty years of his life, at least in the field of politics. There follow in Part I four chapters describing his religious faith, eight pages of extracts from his letters, and eight pages of excerpts from his books. Part II, entitled "As Others Saw Him," contains appreciations of him at various periods of his life and in the several spheres of his activities, by eleven different writers. The result is a book only in the material sense. Yet, despite its defects, it conveys to the reader a clear, if limited, portrait of its subject. This is mainly due to the autobiography, which is honest and therefore interesting. Muir's life and activities were divided into two halves, first the study and teaching of history, and second, party politics. In neither was his achievement commensurate with the expectation of his friends or perhaps with his abilities. Professor Ernest Barker probably gives us the clue to the explanation of his failure by remarking that "he was a professor in politics and a politician among professors." The politician-historian must have as many extraneous gifts as Macaulay to have a chance of reaching the first class; Muir's chief gifts were seriousness and fluency, which are inadequate for the production of historical or literary masterpieces. To be a professor in politics—certainly in English politics—is even more fatal than to be a politician in history, and Muir was never at home and never, therefore, successful, in the House of Commons. It is true that both Wilson and Masaryk were professors and that they carried into politics the aura of the Chair, but, although they were men of a calibre tougher and finer than Muir's, I doubt whether even they would have gone as far in Britain as they did in their own countries. Bismarck used contemptuously to call Gladstone "Professor Gladstone"; and though he was quite wrong in his estimate of Gladstone, the politician, who was the least professorial and the most political of politicians, he was not wrong in his estimate of the professorial politician generally.

Temperamentally and intellectually Muir was through and through a Liberal, and he had all the faults as well as the virtues of Liberalism during the years of its decline and fall. He had, as he says himself, no strong passions or emotions, and the absence of emotion gives to the record of his personal life, to his writing, and to his politics a certain aridity. He was not without the power to win friends or the devotion of those who worked with or for him, but honesty and fluency are insufficient to counterbalance emotional and intellectual aridity. It is doubtful whether even in politics great achievement is possible without some passion of belief, even if it be only a passionate belief in the importance of one's own career. That fact probably explains why Muir, although he devoted the best and most strenuous years of his life to the resuscitation of the Liberal Party, failed so completely.

LEONARD WOOLF

British Philosophers. By KENNETH MATTHEWS. *Collins,* 1943. 4*s.* 6*d.*

It is not an easy undertaking to condense a history of British philosophy within the small compass of a volume of the *Britain in Pictures* series. But Mr. Matthews has fulfilled his difficult task admirably. From Roger Bacon to Bertrand Russell, no British philosopher of eminence is omitted, the salient points of their doctrines being presented with vigour and wit. Occasionally, perhaps, Mr. Matthews' wit is somewhat forced. Thomas Hobbes as "the Bernard Shaw of the seventeenth century" is unfair to Hobbes—and to Mr. Shaw. British philosophical thought forms a profound unity of purpose and practical wisdom. many of these thinkers were statesmen or admini-

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HOME SERVICE AND SECURITY

Company Meeting

VICKERS LIMITED.

THE seventy-seventh Annual General Meeting of Vickers Limited was held on April 4 at Vickers House, Broadway, Westminster, and Mr. A. A. Jamieson (Chairman of the Company) presided.

In his statement, which was again circulated to the Stockholders with the Report and Accounts, the Chairman said:—

"Colonel J. B. Neilson asked to be relieved of his position as Deputy Chairman at the end of 1943, owing to the urgent call upon his time arising from his acceptance of the office of Managing Director of Baldwins Limited. I am glad to say that he is remaining on your Board. Sir Charles Craven has been elected Deputy Chairman.

"There is one item in the Balance Sheet of Vickers-Armstrong's which calls for special explanation. Certain foreign assets of that Company were realised during the year, with the result that the remaining foreign holdings now stand at a nominal figure. With this exception, the Balance Sheet figures are of a normal wartime character, but they reflect practically maximum use of our productive capacity. There has been some change in the nature of the output, with the result that employment has actually decreased in some Works, but the total numbers employed have been more than maintained. The percentage of women employed throughout the Group is 36 and the highest percentage in any Works is 55.

"The Minister of Reconstruction has expressed the desire that industrial concerns should turn their thoughts towards the problem of post-war employment for their employees. This Company is faced by a difficult problem which will call for the closest collaboration between the management and our employees, particularly in the change-over period. Surely, after the tragic experiences resulting from unilateral disarmament, there can be no repetition of that policy, and it will be essential that the strength and technical efficiency of a Group such as yours, with its great value to the country in times of emergency, should be maintained. I believe that orders will continue to be placed with us by the Defence Departments, but, nevertheless, commercial shipbuilding, engineering, steel and civil aviation must absorb a considerable portion of our available capacity. This time we have the experience of 1919 to guide us and in certain products, particularly those of a heavy nature, we had, before the war, established a very sound position and become recognised as leading producers. When peace returns we should, therefore, be better equipped to deal with the problems of change-over than we were in 1919. Certain of our post-war plans have been made, and others are under active consideration, but until victory is achieved our primary concern must be to do everything in our power to assist in achieving that victory at the earliest possible date.

"Many of our employees have now been working long hours with little rest or holiday for seven or eight years. Recognition of their services is given in full measure both by Stockholders and by those who are in a position to judge the extent of their contribution."

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted and the Final Dividend of 6 per cent. approved.

…rors, who had widely travelled and knew the world. …e wonders whether Kant ever left Koenigsberg? …his admirably illustrated little book should serve …ny readers as an amiable and delightful historical …troduction to its subject.

Week-end Competitions

No. 740

…t by Fred Oyster

We offer the usual prizes for the five epigrams …n prose) about food.

Entries should reach this office not later than …onday, April 17th.

…ESULT OF COMPETITION No. 737

…et by William Whitebait

Rumour relates that a recent outbreak of practical joking at Eton took a surrealist turn. One achievement, apparently, was the silencing of the lower-school chapel organ, the pipes of which fell about the heads of unsuspecting masters; another was the transplanting of two trees from the Provost's garden to the middle of a playing field. Competitors are invited to celebrate one or both of these incidents in mock-heroic verse, with a limit of 20 lines.

…eport by William Whitebait

Competitors have risen nobly, as one might …pect. Most of them preferred the Chapel scene …o the trees, and the style varied from Pope and …ilton to parody of *The Burial of Sir John Moore*; …e competitor, R. S. Jaffray, even essayed the dignity …f Latin. Frank Spooner, Patrick Fleming and Allan …. Laing share a first prize of three guineas with …ries beautifully tuned to the occasion; and only …little below them, B. B. Feather's smooth heroics …ceive a second prize of 10*s.* 6*d.*

FIRST PRIZE

(1) THE DALIAD

Sing, Week-end Muse! of meads bedrenched with sun,
Where heroes sport and Waterloo was won;
Of Windsor's stream, two cherubim afloat,
One wrapped in thought, the other in his coat.
Fair Leda was their mother, Mayfair's pet,
The toast of Lords, bred for the smartest set.
One day, 'tis said, while glancing through a book,
The Man-God Dali stole across her look:
Swan-like in form, all cracked, and sprouting trees,
He courted her; and won her heart with ease.
They flew away to deserts strewn with bones,
Where Time is not and human eyes are stones.
Brave Max and Ernst, her angel twins, had sworn
To spread the Law revealed ere they were born.
And lo! two trees, the Sacred Garden's yield
Are found one morn to deck a playing field.
The organ's pipes, all silenced by the news,
Collapse, while horror fills the Chapel pews.
These happenings show how Dali's powers extend
And bring my Muse abruptly to the end.

FRANK SPOONER

(2) THE RAPE OF THE PLOT

Twin trees, forbidden, on Pierian sod
Display their limbs to Adam and to God;
But Adam, spurning Knowledge and her fruits
In lilied Eden seeks instead the roots.
Thus tempts dark Eve, and rosy-finger'd Morn
Descries no plotter, but the plot forlorn.
For root and branch each Royal Scholar grieves,
And Grand Remonstrance sues th'arboreal thieves.
Thus long they search; till haply, wand'ring through
The predetermin'd Fields of Waterloo
(Where Vulcan superseded Mars, and now
The Ducal Sword gives place to Agar's Plough),
Another mead they scan, where youth doth cheer
The deft propulsion of the leathern sphere,
And lo! amid the fescue-bearded plain
The Sylvan Twins have found their Dunsinane!
The tassel'd Masters cast dull grief aside
And Merry Wives greet Windsor's rescu'd pride,
While from the branches choral fowls do whistle
To titillate the thankful ear of Ceci[l].

PATRICK FLEMING

(3) THE LAY OF THE LOWER SCHOOL ORGAN

Clarke Minimus, the Oppidan, by the Jazz Kings he swore:
The great wheeze-box in Lower School should bleat out Bach no more.
By the Jazz Kings he swore it, and trysted that same night
With comrades two, the deed to do, for Heaven and their right!

No gleam from lamp or candle was seen upon the quad:
The stunted grass and leafless trees were all alone with God;
But darkly in the chapel, where the shadows gloomier grew,
A torchlight dim was enough for him who led that dauntless crew.

Now flashes the screwdriver, right skilfully applied;
Now groans the vox humana, uprooted in its pride;
Then cunning works the crowbar, with heaves and twists and taps,
Till by a hair, the pipes hang there, a-quiver to collapse.

A fiery dawn, as red as blood, all Eton saw next day,
And weaklings wending chapelwards swooned all along the way;
But jauntily the organist his opening cadence found,
And then, O Heck! the organ wreck a score of masters crowned!

A sigh of joy ecstatic went up from rank on rank:
The scholars rose, and on tiptoes the blissful details drank;
But the stricken masters, groaning, were carried to their beds,
And the pale matron, muttering low, doctored the blasted heads.

ALLAN M. LAING

EXTRACT FROM THE LONGER VERSION (THE HERO'S REWARD)

. . . They gave him from the tuck-shop that was of private right,
As much as two Fourth-Formers could eat from morn to night . . .

* * * *

. . . When the bloods are toasting muffins and the swots stop conning prose;
When Rosenheimer Major breathes loudly through his nose;
When the Latin cribs are idle; then is the story told,
How Clarke put out the organ's light and knocked the H.M. cold!

* * * *

SECOND PRIZE

How shall I speak, proud College, thy distress?
Or limn a greater madness with a less?
Unthankful Youth who thus, with secret smile,
The hallowed fane of Learning doth defile;
Who, still unpleased by all the arts of man,
Prefers instead the mocking pipes of Pan,
And cares not if on those prayer-bowed in stall
The fragments of their shattered idol fall.
Or you whose hands—but little less profane—
In solemn hour, from the Provostial plain
Two startled vegetables by force remove
To ground whose use their fruit may not improve.
How shall the dreaded shades in concert mourn
To see the pride of a once-lovely lawn
Compelled, unwilling, grace and shade to yield
To some unlovely, scarred, and footworn field?
O, floreat! Oh mockery supreme.
The equal prey of each opposed team!
How shall the Muse thy dreadful fate lament—?
Her reeds are scattered, and her breath is spent.

B. B. FEATHER

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Entertainments

SCALA. MUS. 5731. Wolfit Shakespeare Ssn. This wk.: 12th Night, Hamlet, Volpone, etc. Spec. Easter M. perf., 6 p.m. Merch. of Venice.

CHANTICLEER Theatre Club, Clareville St., S.W.7 (1 min. Glouc. Rd: Tube), Tues.-Sat. Evngs., 7 p.m. Mats. Sat., Sun., 3 p.m. "The Venetian," by Clifford Bax. Seats 5s. Members only. Partics. KEN 7577. Opening Ap. 19th, "The Orator." New play by L. Birch.

ARTS (TEM. 7544). Evgs. 7. Sat.–Sun. and Easter Mon. 2.30. "The Philanderer" by Bernard Shaw. Mems. only. Th. mems. 5s.

UNITY. "Green and Pleasant Land." Fri.–Sat., 7.30. Sun., 3.30 and 7.30. Mems. only. EUS 5391.

WESTMINSTER (Vic 0283/4). Daily 2.15. Wed. and Sat., 6 sharp. Robert Donat presents Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband."

ACADEMY, Oxford St. Ger. 2981. Duvivier's "Heart of a Nation." (U). Raimu, Michele Morgan, Louis Jouvet; and "Danger Area" (U).

TORCH Theatre. Mar. 31–April 23. John Laurie, Finlay Currie: "Edge of the World." 3 and 6.30, Film. Mem., 1s. 6d. Seats 3s. 6d. 37 Wilton Pl., Knightsbridge. SLO 4424.

NINETEENTH concert of French Music. Under auspices of French Committee of National Liberation, Wigmore Hall, W.1. Thurs. next, 13th, at 6.15. Albert Roussel. Violin Sonata II, Songs Joueurs de Flute and works by Duruflé, Messiaen, Francaix. Megan Foster (soprano), Maria Lidka (violin and viola), Leonard Isaacs, Gerald Moore (piano), Geoffrey Gilbert (flute). Tickets: 10s., 7s. 6d., 5s., 2s. 6d., from Hall (WEL 2141). London Phil. Arts Club members admitted at Club rates.

ADELPHI Theatre, Strand (Tem. 7611). London Philharmonic Orchestra. Sun., Apr 9th, 2.30. Elgar: "The Dream of Gerontius." Conductor: Sir Adrian Boult. Heddle Nash, Margaret McArthur, Henry Cummings, Luton Choral Soc. Sun., Apr. 16th, 2.30. Walter Goehr Orchestra. Bach Programme: Sinfonia to a lost Cantata. The Art of Fugue. Brandenburg Concerto No. 1. Conductor: Walter Goehr. Tkts. 2s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. Box Office and Agencies.

AGNES Walker, brilliant Scots pianist, pupil of Lamond. Wigmore Hall, Sun., April 16th, at 3 p.m. Beethoven, Schumann, Scriabine, Liszt, Ireland. Tickets 8s. 6d., 6s., 2s., Hall & Ibbs & Tillett, 124 Wigmore St., W.1.

Exhibitions, Lectures and Meetings

A.I.A. 1944. Members' Exhibition and London Philharmonic Orchestra Exhibition of Drawings by Kapp. R.B.A. Galleries, 6a Suffolk St., Pall Mall, Apr. 15–May 6.

PAINTINGS by Xenia Berkeley and Marjorie Wilding. Foyle's Gallery, 121 Charing Cross Rd., W.C.2. April 3rd-29th.

PETER Jones Gallery, Paintings, Drawings, & Sculpture, by Ehrlich, Koeningsberger, Meninsky, Palmer, Uhlman, March 23rd–April 20th. First floor, Sloane Sq., S.W.1.

SOCIETY for Educ. in Art Conf., Central School, Southampton Row. Spkrs. incl. Sir Fred Clarke, P. H. Jowett, Herbert Read, John Rothenstein, R. R. Tomlinson. Mems. 7s. 6d. crse. Non.-ms., 1s. per lec. Apr. 11–15.

PUBLIC meeting on "The Future of Germany." Easter Sun., April 9th, 7 p.m. Denison Hse., 296 Vauxhall Bridge Rd., near Victoria Stn. Speakers: H. N. Brailsford, J. Burns Hynd, M.P., Edith Moore (Gt. Britain), J. Smets (Belgium), Yves Goeau (France), Willi Eichler (Germany), E. Scherer (Poland). Socialist Vanguard Group.

PUBLIC Lecture on Theosophy, U.L.T., 17 Gt. Cumberland Pl., Marble Arch. Every Sun., 7 p.m. April 9th, "St. John and the Gnostics." April 16th, "Shankara, the Teacher of Indian Philosophy."

12 UNIVERSITY Extension Lectures on "Criminal Law and its Administration," by A. C. L. Morrison (Sen. Chief Clerk, Met. Police Cts.), on Sats. at 2.30, will begin Apr. 15th at Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, 17 Manchester St., W.1. (WEL 6037.) Fee £1.

ETHICAL Church, Queensway, W.2. Apl. 9th, 11 a.m., H. J. Blackham: "Ethical Religion—Values."

JIM Griffiths, M.P., on "Who is to Control Industry?" Chair: Ian Mikardo. Wed. April 12th, at Livingstone Hall, S.W.1. Tickets 1s. 3d. Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St., S.W.1.

UNDERSTANDING Ourselves. "Psychological Preparation for Post-War Changes." Series of 4 lectures. Weds., 7 p.m. Caxton Hall, Westminster by Mary Macaulay beginning April 26th.—Admission 2s. at door.

AMRITSAR—Wipe out the Memory with a free India now! Public Meeting. Sir Richard Acland, Fenner Brockway, Surat Alley, etc. Caxton Hall, Westminster. Sun. April 16th, 3 p.m. Federation of Indian Assocs. and Indian Freedom Campaign.

FABIAN International Youth Forum meeting at 2.30, Sat., April 15th, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1. "International Working Class Unity." Speaker, K. Zilliacus. Details of meeting, prize essay competition, week-end conference, apply Secretary, Youth Forum, Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St., S.W.1.

HAMPSTEAD Group. Left Book Club. "The Balkans in Transition." A. Slavo Klemencic, The South Slav Committee. Wed., Apr. 12th, 8 p.m. 31 Broadhurst Gdns., N.W.6.

"THE Search after Truth."—A talk followed by discussion, at the Bahá'í Centre, 1 Victoria St., S.W.1, on Sun., April 9th, at 3.30 p.m.

NATIONAL Gallery, Trafalgar Sq., W.C.2, "The Artist and Reconstruction" series of lectures arranged by Artists International Assoc., Suns., 3 p.m. April 16th "The Painter's Place," Eric Newton Adm. 1s., Mems., 6d.

Lectures—continued

"BETTER World After the War." E. F. M. Durbin and Karl Polanyi. 8 public lectures on Thurs., 6.30 p.m., beginning Apr. 20th. Course fee 5s. "Is a Better World Obtainable?" "The Contribution of Knowledge," "The Good Will," "The Possession of Power," "The Conditions of War and Peace," "The Use and Abuse of Sovereignty," "The Place of the Nation," "World Order and World Freedom." Partics. Sec., Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Rd., S.E.1.

U.S.S.R. 5 public lectures by W. W. Gottlieb. Tues., 6.30 p.m., beginning April 18th. Course fee, 2s. 6d. "Greek Tragedy and Modern Problems." 6 lecs. by Dr. J. T. Sheppard. Mons., 6.30 p.m., beginning April 24th. Course fee, 5s. Other new courses include: "Clear Thinking," "Philosophy," "Contemporary Drama," "Germany after the Nazis." Partics. Sec., Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Rd., S.E.1.

SOVIET Reconstruction Policy. Sat., Apr. 15th, "Scope and Administrative Framework." Jacob Miller. Sat., Apr. 22nd, "Communications and Essential Services." Eric Godfrey. Sat., Apr. 29th, "Agriculture and Food." F. Le Gros Clark. Sat., May 6th, "Housing and Town-planning." Arthur Ling. All at 2.30 p.m., London School of Hygiene, Keppel St., W.C.1. Tickets 3s. for series (single lectures 1s.) at door or from S. C. R., 98 Gower St., W.C.1 (EUSton 2315).

RACIAL Relations Group (Inst. of Sociology). Fri., April 14th, 5 p.m. Friends House, Euston Rd. A. Yusuf Ali "On the Pan-Arab Movement." Visitors welcome.

N.C.L.C. Conference on "Education and the Future," at St. Martin's School of Art. 109 Charing Cross Rd., W.C.2, Sat., Apr. 15th, 2.45 p.m. Luke Fawcett, A.U.B.T.W., John D. Mack, M.P., J. P. M. Millar, N.C.L.C. Visitors and delegates invited.

SOUTH Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Sunday meetings, 11 a.m. April 16th: C. E. M. Joad, M.A., D.Lit., "What is a Civilisation?" (2).

Appointments Vacant and Wanted

None of the vacancies for women advertised in this journal relates to a woman between 18 and 41 unless such a woman (a) has living with her a child of hers under the age of 14, or (b) is registered under the Blind Persons Acts, or (c) has a Ministry of Labour permit to allow her to obtain employment by individual efforts.

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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE RED ARMY ENTERS EUROPE

THE Red Army once more stands at the eastern gates of Europe. Speculations about the policy of a victorious U.S.S.R. are soon to be put to the test of experience. Odessa has fallen; the Crimea has been stormed; strong Soviet forces are pushing deep into Rumania; in the Carpathians a Czech Brigade, marching with the vanguard of Marshal Zhukov's armies, has reached the frontiers of its homeland. This Easter Saturday, when the Czech flag was again raised on its native soil, will be remembered as one of the decisive dates of the war.

These successes raise the question whether the Germans can hold any of their positions in the Balkans, and whether any of their satellites in Central and Southern Europe will much longer prefer the risks of fighting in alliance with Germany to the risks of surrendering while Hitler's armies are still intact. Again, in view of the possibility of a Soviet advance towards Lvov, on the direct road to Germany, Hitler's generals may have to consider a general withdrawal from the Balkans to a line north of the Danube. In any case, the effects of the Soviet offensive must be profound in every Balkan country. From Rumania panic conditions are reported and there is at least the possibility that Allied contacts with the Rumanian Government may lead to Antonescu becoming a Rumanian Badoglio. The collapse of Rumania would add greatly to the difficulty of the German defence of the Carpathians.

There has been much discussion about the policy Stalin would adopt towards countries through which his armies must march in pursuit of the Germans. Now the pattern becomes clearer. There are two sources from which we may deduce the day-to-day political developments that will march together with the Russian armies: first, the official manifestoes which, it seems, are to accompany the crossing of each fresh frontier, and secondly, the shifting emphasis of the Communist line in various countries. The former repeat the declarations which Soviet diplomacy has made ever since Moscow and Teheran. The Soviet Union seeks no territorial gains beyond her 1940 boundaries; there is to be no overt interference with the internal politics of her neighbours. Such a programme can be a powerful weapon in the campaign in Eastern Europe. Of all people the Soviet statesmen should know the value of political disintegration to an advancing army.

It would be naive to assume that this is all that is in the mind of Moscow. Naturally, the Kremlin disclaims responsibility for the actions of Communists in Europe. Yet there is a striking similarity in the new approach which they seem to be making towards governments in exile. Up till now they have bitterly attacked the reactionary cliques who have, in some cases, opposed the popular resistance forces in which the Communists have played a leading part. Now, in Italy, they seem to have almost succeeded in persuading the other opposition parties to participate in the Badoglio administration. This effort should be facilitated by the King's designation of Umberto as Regent when the Allies enter Rome. In North Africa, two Communists have become members of the French National Committee. In both cases, they have given as their main reason the desire to assist in a more speedy and effective prosecution of the war. They may also have considered that if they remained too long as merely high-principled critics, they would be condemning themselves to the political wilderness at the decisive stage of the war.

In two other instances they have modified their approach. Of all the exiled Governments, the Czechs have been the most consistently friendly towards the U.S.S.R.; though the Czech Communists have held no places in the Cabinet they have been fervent supporters of President Benes. Now they have demanded a reorganisation of the Government in order to replace it by a coalition of Dr. Benes' own party, the Socialists and themselves. This change would eliminate the Right-Wing politicians who took part in the post-Munich Government. In particular they are calling for the removal of the Prime Minister, Mr. Sramek, and the Minister of Finance, Mr. Feierabend, who, they allege, once was a supporter of the Sudeten Nazis. Dr. Benes appears to oppose such a reshuffle until after the Government has returned to Czechoslovakia. But whether the Communists are acting on their own initiative in raising the thorny question of pre-war collaboration and association between the Nazis and certain prominent Czechs, or whether they have Moscow behind them, they obviously intend to use this issue as a means of exerting pressure upon the Government.

The most curious case is that of Greece. Faced with the demand among the troops that the Greek Government in Cairo should be widened to include members of the E.A.M. and a counter-move to turn the Government into a clique of reactionary officials, Mr. Tsouderos resigned. Mr. Venizelos, his suggested successor, proved unacceptable to anyone. When Mr. Santos, the secretary of the Greek Communist Party, recently offered to negotiate with Mr. Tsouderos to form a broader Government, he probably foresaw that the present Government in Cairo would reach such an impasse. With the formation of a political committee inside Greece, of which Santos himself is a member, King George must choose between the prospect of a provisional government like Marshal Tito's and the recognition of the right of E.A.M. and the other guerilla groups to representation in his Cabinet.

It is too early to gauge the full implications of what appears to be a new Communist policy. But it is clear that Moscow subordinates all other considerations to that of the most speedy ending of the war. (Unconditional surrender has never sounded sense in Moscow.) Stalin further desires to reassure his Western Allies about the moderation and respectability of his policy. Apart from any other motive, he desires the United Nations to remain united after the war. He opposes plans for new grouping of States until he can be assured, after Germany's defeat, that such regional groups look eastward for support as much as, or more than, they look to Britain and America. We hear that Marshal Tito hopes to see a Balkan Federation which would begin with an association of Bulgaria and Albania with Yugoslavia. Communists might find such projects easier to achieve if they were members of legitimate governments in the next crucial months. Whether such a policy is the best for the future of European democracy can